

Anne Griue 1774

S E R M O N S

O N

V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S,

W I T H

S O M E T R A C T S.

By the late Reverend and Learned

J E R E M I A H H U N T, D. D.

V O L. I V.

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M D C C X L I X.

SERMONS

SOME TRACTS



Presented by George Bower, D.D.

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Dr. *Hunt's* sermons.

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P A G E 273. line 23. read [*something*] p. 348. l. 18. after [*moment*] put a semicolon. *ibid* l. 25. r. [*safely*]

Errata omitted, Vol. II.

P. 45. l. 2. r. [*and*] p. 190. l. 14. r. [*exercises*] p. 196. d. l. 15, 16. and read [*that several of them were historical narrations of things past, written after the facts had happened.*] *ibid* l. 19. for [*this prediction*] r. [*that prophesy*] *ibid* l. 20, 21. for [*three hundred years before its coming about*] r. [*a long time before several things, there foretold, were accomplished*] p. 236. l. 21. d. [*either*] *ibid* l. 23. for [*or, that he*] r. [*Whereas he now gives many proofs of his moral government, and*] p. 260 l. 22. r. [*immediately*] p. 336. l. last. r. [*favor*] p. 384. l. 7. r. [*splendor*]

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last, r. [*abhorrence*] p. 357. l. 24. r. [*of*] p. 365. l. last, r. [*And*] p. 382. l. 7. after [*justness*] put a comma. p. 439. l. 15. r. [*resemblance*]

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An Erratum omitted in the first dissertation annexed to the three epistles of St. John.

P. 149. l. 12. after the word [*that,*] read the rest of that paragraph, thus, [*out of those fifteen copies, which he consulted, eight had this disputed text. But, upon examining the matter more narrowly, it has been found that none of those eight MSS. had any part of the first epistle of St. John; and that the other seven, which had this epistle, had none of them this disputed text. Vid. Millii prolegom. 1157, 1158.*]



S E R M O N I.

The reasonableness of coming unto
Christ.



J O H N V. 40.

*Ye will not come to me; that ye
might have life.*



IN discoursing on these words, SERM.
considered in their connec- I.
tion, I shall observe the fol-
lowing method.

I. Explain the duty, which is implied
in the text, of *coming to Christ*.

II. Shew the reasons, upon which the
duty is founded.

VOL. IV.

B

III.

SERM. III. Represent the ground of the *Jews* rejecting the doctrine, which the *Messias* came to impart.

I.

IV. The benefit, which our Lord came to communicate to those, who would *come* to him, and obey his institution.

V. I shall make practical reflections.

I. I shall explain the duty, which is implied in the text, of *coming to Christ*.

By coming unto Christ, we are to understand our regarding him as our teacher, and putting ourselves under the directions, which he, by the commission he received from the Father, did impart. It is used in this sense, *Matt. xi. 28, &c. Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. For I am meek, and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.* And, when our Lord recommends it, as the duty of those, to whom he addresses, *to come to him*, as a teacher, we must suppose, that hereby he designed to represent himself in the character of an authorised teacher, sent from the Father.

coming unto Christ.

3

SERM.

I.

The doctrine, which our Lord communicated, is plain; and consists but of very few things. We are to regard him, however, as invested with authority, by the Father; and delivering what he received from him. And so those, to whom he addresses, are under the strongest obligations to receive him, and entertain his doctrine. Our Lord therefore says, If they did not receive him, they did not receive the Father, who sent him.

With great skill, indeed, our Savior declines representing himself, in express terms, as the *Messias*. That character included in it, that he was a *King*; (*Messiah* and *King* being used, by the *Jews*, as terms of the same import) and, therefore, he takes such a conduct, as might make appear, that he was the *Messiah*; and yet give no countenance to the *Jews* (who had formed an expectation of a temporal kingdom) to attempt to set him up, as a king, in that view: or that our Lord might avoid any pretence, that his enemies might take the advantage of, to represent him as designing such a character. Our Savior therefore, uses other terms, which were generally

SERM. used by the *Jews*, to imply the *Messias* ;
 I. namely, *the Son of Man, the Son of God,*
he that was to come, and the like.

As our Lord had represented himself as coming from *the Father* ; as having received from him the words, which he delivered ; and as one, to whom the Father had fully opened his counsels : He sets before them, to whom he applies, that neither their descent from *Abraham*, nor being circumcised, nor their exactest observance of the ceremonies of the law, not even sacrifices, would avail to the attainment of the favor of *God*, and eternal life, without sincere repentance.

After he had often represented, that they must quit every course of vice, and be reconciled, in their temper and conduct, to the precepts of universal righteousness and beneficence ; and have a love to *God* superior to the affections they had to any thing, in this present scene : He represents that herein *the kingdom of God* consisted ; not in meats, and drinks, but in righteousness and true holiness ; he takes them off from laying the stress of their hopes on sacredness of places ; tells them, that they had too much regard
 to

to externals, in the worship they paid to SERM.
the Creator; assures them, that the wor- I.

ship, the Father now expected from them, and which he was sent to appoint, was *spiritual*; suitable to their intelligent nature; consisting in a sincere love of God, expressed by a steady obedience to his precepts; and a love to one another, attended with all the genuine fruits of an undissembled affection. He represents that, without a divine temper and a good life, they could never form a just and well-grounded hope of attaining that life and immortality, which he was sent to set in a due light. This is the doctrine of our Savior. And, when we are exhorted *to come to him*, the meaning is, that we are to put ourselves, as disciples, under his instructions; which, by the authority of the *Father*, he has communicated to us. We are to entertain and believe him to be the *Messias*; and imbrace his doctrine; and yield to be formed by it, in our disposition and life. We are, as his disciples, not to form our expectation of happiness, upon any thing short of a divine complexion of mind, and an extensively virtuous life.

SERM. Wherever we have fallen into a mistake of

I. judgment, reason, or conduct, we are called upon, by *the Son of God*, to repent; *that is*, to change our principles, and alter our conduct and behavior. Farther; he has opened to us, that he is appointed, by the *Father*, to be judge of all; and according to this doctrine, which he received from him, and has delivered to us, our everlasting state will be determined.

II. I come now to the reasons, upon which we are obliged thus *to come to Christ*, receive him, and entertain his doctrine.

I am led to this, by the contexture of this discourse. And, if we carefully attend to it, we shall see represented, in a very strong light, most of the evidences, that accompanied the mission of our Savior; which are proper to convince us, that the doctrine he delivered, is that, which he received from the *Father*.

The first argument is expressed, *ver. 46. For had ye believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me. Compare this, with ver. 39. Search the Scriptures (or you do search the Scriptures) for in*

coming unto Christ.

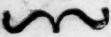
7

in them you think you have eternal life : and SERM.
they are they, which testify of me. Do not I.
imagine that I will accuse you [Jews] to the
Father. There is one, who accuses you, even
Moses.

“ I know you pretend to have an high
“ opinion of him, and think to be justifi-
“ ed by the observance of his laws. And,
“ therefore, in him you trust. If you
“ had considered it with care, you would
“ have found, that, even by the respect
“ you have for *Moses*, you would have
“ been led to have entertained me, as *the*
“ *Son of God*. For he has borne witness
“ of me ; as all the other prophets have
“ done. And, if you believe not his wri-
“ tings (to which you seem to express the
“ highest deference) how should you be-
“ lieve my words ; when they are deliver-
“ ed by one, who appears in so mean cir-
“ cumstances? ”

The force of the argument lies in the
exact accomplishment of the antient pro-
phcies, concerning the *Messiah*. *Deut.*
xviii. 18. *Moses* says, that a prophet like
unto him, would God raise up.—A
Prophet : which plainly makes it appear,

SERM. that the writer had not a respect to a succession of prophets:—especially, when

I.  we attend to what follows, *A prophet like unto me* [says *Moses*.:] that should give an intire institution, as he had done. And, as *Moses* gave attestation of the *Messias*, so other prophets foretold the time of his appearing, the place of his birth, the manner of his life, the miracles he should work; his death, and resurrection, and advancement to glory. Now this is a very strong motive to ingage and influence all, to whom this doctrine should be fully promulgated, to receive *Jesus* as the *Christ*, and to entertain his doctrine, as coming from heaven.

Certain it is, that *Jesus* would appear to be one sent from the Father, by other evidences. But it would not be fully demonstrated, that he was the *Messiah*, if there was not an exact correspondence between the predictions concerning the *Messiah*, and our Lord. But, when we trace this; and find no where a prediction of the *Messiah*, but what is exactly accomplished in our Lord, it is a considerable proof that he was *the sent of God*.

(2.) An-

(2.) Another argument we have, *ver.* SERM.
 32, 33. *There is another, that beareth wit-* I.
ness of me; and I know, the witness, which
he witnesseth of me, is true. Ye sent unto
John; [John i. 19, &c.] and he bare wit-
ness unto the Truth, [ver. 29, 30.] Our
 Lord, in the preceding verses of this fifth
 chapter, represents, that, “if he should
 “bear witness of himself *only*, his witness
 “would not be true, valid, and confirmed
 “to them. But I (says he) have ano-
 “ther, that beareth witness of me [*John*];
 “and I know that the witness, which he
 “witnesseth of me, is true. [*ver.* 30, 31.]”
 He descended from *Zacharias* and *Eliza-*
beth, whose moral character was remark-
 able and distinguished. His father was of
 the priestly order; and, therefore, he was,
 when he entered upon the thirtieth year of
 his age, to officiate in the service of the
 temple. But then, the word of the Lord
 came unto him; and he was sent as a pro-
 phet, and in the character of a forerunner
 of the *Messias*; and gave full testimony of
 him. Now (adds our Savior) *I mention*
this for your own sakes, that, ye might be
saved. For I receive not testimony from man
 only.

SERM. only. *You had an esteem for him, and*
 I. *looked upon him (and justly too) as one who*
 had a divine mission. *And, you seemed pleased with him, as a burning and shining light, for a season; whose doctrine and life were as strictly moral, as his habit and way of living were severe and rigorous. Since, therefore, you had sufficient reason to believe that he was a prophet, and he gave testimony to me, you cannot but infer from thence, that I am the prophet, and light, that was to come into the world, which he declared me to be.*

(3.) Our Savior lays not the proof of his mission only upon the testimony of *John*; but adds, *That he had greater witness than that of John, namely, the works which the Father impowered him to effect. Ver. 36. I have greater witness than that of John. For the works, which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* The many and public miracles, which our Savior did, by a word, and some of them at a distance; viz. giving sight to the blind, making the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk, cleansing the lepers, curing all man-
 ner

coming unto Christ.

II

ner of infirmities, and even raising the dead, with a view that thereby he might prove his mission, are an undoubted evidence of his being sent by *the Father*.
Especially, since there is nothing in his doctrine or life, that carries any inconsistency with such a pretension or claim.

SERM.
I.
}

Besides: the miracles, which our Lord wrought, have a connection with his doctrine. He came to open the greatest goodness, and richest mercy, of God, to men; his miracles were miracles of goodness. He came to discover and declare the doctrine of remission of sins; and, by curing all diseases, and raising the dead, he confirmed the truth of it. He told his followers, that, *if they believed in him, they should not die for-ever; but he would raise them up, at the last day*. His resurrection-miracles were a clear confirmation of the truth thereof.

Ver. 37. OUR LORD adds the testimony, which the Father gave him, by a voice from heaven, at his baptism; when the heavens opened, and the Spirit (in the glory) descended upon him; hovering as a dove. And a voice came from heaven, say-

SERM. saying, *Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I*

I. *am well-pleased*, Matt. iii. 16, &c. At his

transfiguration, (*Matt. xvii. 5.*) when a bright cloud over-shadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him.* When our Lord was exceedingly troubled, and prayed to his Father: *Glorifie thy name.* Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, “*I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again.*” John xii. 28.

Moreover: *the Father* gave testimony to him, in raising him from the dead; and giving him power to raise others from the grave. *Ver. 25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of GOD; and they, that hear, shall live.* Which words are not to be understood of a spiritual resurrection; but, probably, refer to those, whom our Savior raised, after his own resurrection. But then this is enlarged, *Ver. 28, 29. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which, all, that are in the graves, shall hear his voice; and shall come forth; they, that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they, that have done*

done evil, unto the resurrection of damna- SERM.
tion. I.

The last evidence, which our Savior gives, in this chapter, is *ver. 41.* where he represents that he had no view of interest, or honor. This they could not charge him with. His conduct, on this account, they had not the least reason to blame. *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.* And yet you have the strongest reasons to induce you to come unto me. *For I receive not honor from men.* You cannot make it appear, that I have any other aim, than to do the will of my Father, who sent me.

I seek not my own glory; but the glory of my Father, who gave me commission to instruct you in the path of happiness.

These are the arguments, which lie in the contexture of this discourse.

Give me leave to mention another evidence, which I shall not enlarge upon; because it is not laid down in this chapter; *namely*, the effusion of the Spirit, which our Lord had foretold; and whereby his disciples, and particularly the apostles,

SERM. files, had proper furniture for laying the
 I. foundation of the Gospel-kingdom, and spreading it far and wide: the gift of languages, the ready interpretation of them, and internal illuminations, imparted, especially, to the apostles; who had a clear and comprehensive view of the intire scheme; and an ability, in some degrees, to communicate extraordinary gifts, to *Jewish*, and *Gentile* converts, by the imposition of their hands.—I come now,

III. To consider the reasons, why the *Jews* rejected the *Messiah*; although he was attended with so clear and strong an evidence.

In our text, it is thus expressed; “You *will not* come unto me.” It was not for want of sufficient evidence, that he was the sent of the Father; it was not that, which arose from any thing in the doctrines, which he delivered; or insufficiency of motives and encouragements. No: it was the effect of their criminal prejudices, and obstinacy. “Ye *will not* come to me, “that ye might have life.” This is farther explained, *ver. 42; 44. I know that you*

you have not the love of GOD in you. You, SERM.
indeed, pretend to be the people of GOD. I.

You profess to own the one true and living GOD, who created the heavens and the earth; but I know, that you have such a regard to the profits and honors of this life, that you cannot, with any propriety of speech, be said to have a true and genuine love of GOD. This is farther expressed, *ver. 44. How can ye believe, that receive honor, one of another; and seek not the honor that cometh from GOD only? How can you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, when your great intention is to gain the applause of others; and arrive at power and authority? when you are sunk into wrong opinions of the Messiah's coming, as a temporal king, to raise you to worldly grandeur; and are so immoderately in love with temporal power, and interest? How can you like me, who come in low and mean circumstances, and open to your view a happiness in a future state, that is spiritual and heavenly; when you have contracted such worldly dispositions? It is owing to your criminal bias, that you do not receive me and my doctrine.* "You

"will

SERM. “ *will not* come unto me, that you might

I. “ *have life.*” It is not, because my doc-

trine is not worthy to be received; or the

rewards, which I propose to you in another

world, are not great enough to engage.

It is not because the proof and evidence is

not sufficient; that you reject me and my

instructions. It is owing only to your

carnal dispositions and worldly views.—

I come now,

IV. To the motive, which our Savior proposes to engage those, to whom he addressed, to receive him as their master and teacher; and to entertain his doctrine, as of divine original. “ Ye will not come to me, *that ye might have life.*”

Life was that, which our Lord came to open to those, whom he addressed to, and to whom his doctrine was promulgated. He came, that those, who received him, and believed in his doctrine, and were influenced by it in their lives, might not be subject to the second death; but have (subsequent upon a resurrection) a state of endless happiness, and indefectible glory:—that they might be raised, in mind and body, to perfecti-

on; be introduced into the presence of glory, and mingle with the society of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect: that they might have pure and unalloyed joys, growing to endless ages. This is the life, and happiness that Christ came to discover, and promise, to those who come unto him, and put themselves under his instructions.

SERM.

I.

V. I now come to make practical reflections.

(1.) From this discourse, we may see, that *revelation* does not intend, that we should imbrace the truths, which it contains, without proper and sufficient evidence.

In all his dispensations to men, God has acted in a manner, suitable to their character, as intelligent, and reasonable. *The light of nature* teaches us what is right and fit. And *revelation* is added, to give us such means, and set before us such motives and encouragements, as might (if attended to) be effectual to bring us to a meetness for endless happiness, in another world. And, if we will attend to the evidence of the gospel, we shall find it strong; and

SERM. sufficient to bear down any other prejudices,

I. ces, than those that spring from vice. But, if people are resolved to indulge any criminal inclinations, no evidence, proper to a state of tryal, will rise so high, as to conquer and overcome such a bias. It is surprising, that Christians do not often take a clear and extensive view of the evidences, upon which the Christian religion is founded. Our Savior does not expect that we should believe him merely for his word's sake: he has given us proofs and evidences, which are clear and strong. When he came; in all the circumstances of his birth, and life, and death, the predictions of the Prophets, were exactly accomplished. When he appeared in the public character of an authorised teacher, the heavens opened, the glory descended; and the spirit was given him, without measure: at the same time, a voice came from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son*; this is my elect, of whom I have, by my prophets, in ages past, made mention. He comes to open my counsels; by which you may attain endless happiness and glory.

When

When our Lord, in a public character, SERM.
taught and instructed the *Jews*, the *Father* I.
attended him with extraordinary powers; }
by which he cured all diseases, and raised
persons from the grave. These were tes-
timonials of the *Father*; and such as the
prophets had before mentioned concerning
the *Messiah*.

The doctrine, which he delivered, was
worthy of GOD. It carries *moral virtue*
(which is the ultimate design of the whole
revelation) to the highest perfection. It's
precepts are such, as are proper to refine
us, and render us perfect and happy;
which, even our reason (when cultivated
and improved) will allow to be binding,
and obligatory. There is nothing, which
he recommends to our practice, but what
appears to be agreeable, and congruous to
the highest reason. He calls men only to
quit error and vice, and to entertain truth
and virtue. He represents *repentance* as
necessary to make those, who have sined,
meet for everlasting glory. He exhorts
them, indeed, to believe in him; but then,
this faith in him was founded upon the
strongest proof of his being sent from hea-

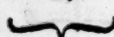
SERM. ven, that the nature of the thing would

I. admit; and includes in it an influence upon the temper and life. I know very well, that some late writers have ridiculed *the revelation of CHRIST*, in regard that it hath made *faith* a term, upon which they may form the hope of everlasting life. *Faith* (they say) *as it is an assent, is not in our power: it must be in proportion to evidence. I can neither receive the truth of a proposition, or apprehend it to be false; but just as the light is, in which it appears to my mind. It is, therefore, surprising, that faith should be made a necessary term of salvation.* A very amazing objection, this! They do not carefully attend to the idea, which is annexed to the term *Faith*, in the scripture use of it. It includes an honest disposition of mind to examine; a freedom from prejudices, to entertain truth when discovered; and an upright disposition to be influenced by it, in temper, and life. It is, therefore, plain that there is no reason to object against *faith's* being a condition; upon which we may form an expectation of receiving the
bles-

blessings, promised in the gospel-dispensation. SERM.
I.

Is there any thing in the views of another world, which this *revelation* has opened to us, contrary to, or inconsistent with, the reason of things? or that is disagreeable to the best sentiments, which we can form of GOD? What is more consistent to *reason*, than that there should be a day of retribution? that, when there is, in the course of providence, such a disparity, in this life, which cannot be made appear congruous to the perfections of the wise governor of the world; there should be a day, in which these things should be set right; and placed in the fullest and most proper light? and, if there be, in the Christian-revelation, particular circumstances added to this, we shall find that there is a propriety in them, to make the argument of greater weight and moment. We are now taught that Christ is the judge; and the way men shall be tryed, shall be, by the different laws they were under. And, according as they have done in the body, whether good or evil, they shall receive happiness, or the sentence of death.

SERM. Farther: our Lord appears to have had

I.  no view of honor, or interest, in this world. He acted singly from the mission and authority he had from *the Father*; and the prospect of the joy that was set before him. And he was constant and steady in delivering the words, which *the Father* gave him to impart. No ridicule, no opposition, no contradiction of sinners could dispirit him; but he went on, and sealed the truth of his doctrine with his own blood.

If we farther consider the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, and his giving of the Spirit, according to his own prediction; there will arise, from thence, an indisputable evidence of his being sent of God, and placed at the right hand of God, invested with all power in heaven and earth, and made head of angels, and men. If we will, therefore, take the proof of Christianity in its proper compass, it will appear exceeding strong.

Moreover: the credentials, which attended the apostles; who, after Christ, first preached the gospel, were sufficient to give undeniable proof, that they had a mission

mission from *the Son of God*. The doctrine, which they taught, was excellent, and worthy of God, and proper to raise reasonable nature to true perfection, and real happiness. They appear to have had no views of interest, or ambition, in this world ; but sealed the truth of Christ's resurrection (of which they were sent to be witnesses) with their own blood. Neither did they raise in the minds of those, who imbraced their doctrine, any other expectation than of a spiritual, divine, and heavenly life, in a future state. Let us, then, carefully attend to these evidences ; and not by little difficulties that may be started, be induced to reject a doctrine, which is attended with so strong and direct a proof.

There are some, indeed, who appear so fickle ; that, when there is any difficulty raised, they are tempted to reject a doctrine, that has strong, direct proof for it. This, surely, is not a proper method, or becoming reasonable Beings to take. We see some difficulties attend the evidence of *natural religion*. And yet, who is there, that will venture to reject such principles ; only because they cannot answer every difficulty,

SERM.
I.

SERM. culty, that may be started? It is fit that
 I. we sum up the intire evidence of the Christian doctrine ; and seriously and considerately weigh it. And then see, whether the difficulties are so great as to over-balance the proof. This appears to be a rational method of proceeding. And I dare venture to say, if any take this method, with integrity, there will be found evidence sufficient to prove plain and uncorrupted Christianity.

I will not be accountable for all the schemes, that have been formed ; and the opinions, that have been superinduced upon the Christian doctrine. There are no inconsistencies, or contradictions, in the revelation itself. When, upon proper evidence, we entertain Christianity in its simplicity, and as it lies in the sacred writings, let us take care to act suitably to its precepts, and to the example of our great Lord and Master. Hereby will our faith be thoroughly settled. On the contrary, if we allow ourselves in a course of vice, we shall have a secret dislike to the gospel. No one will perfectly approve of it, whose complection of mind is quite different from
 what

what this doctrine recommends and in-
joins. SERM.
I.

(2.) Let us adore the goodness of God, that has opened to our view a resurrection to eternal life, and glory.

Some Philosophers, in their writings, justly represent *death*, as that which throws a sable veil over all the glory and splendor of this world. And, without doubt, there is something extremely damping in the thought of *death*, attended with the circumstance, that it will be for-ever. It is impossible, a man should think home, and not feel pain in such a view. It is a vast advantage to us, that what the wisest writers amongst the *Heathens* attained but a glimpse of, is now set in a clear light by the gospel; whereby we may gain a victory over the world, and become meet for glory in a future life.

It is a benefit to receive any expression of divine goodness: but this is such a privilege as demands our highest gratitude. Let us then act suitably to the obligations that such goodness brings us under, walk as children of the light, and adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

(3.) I

SERM. (3.) I would remark how unreasonable
 I. it is for any to enter into such a way of
 thinking, as to make the failure of attain-
 ing eternal happiness, to derive from any
 thing, but their own obstinacy.

Many strange, and unaccountable schemes
 have been formed, and introduced into
 Christianity, by men. Not only the *world*,
 and the *devil*, but even GOD himself has
 been brought in, to account for unbelief,
 and rejecting the gospel. It has been re-
 presented, in a light, that is quite incon-
 sistent to the best notions which we can
 form of GOD; and disagreeable to the *re-
 velation*, which *the Son of God* has deli-
 vered to us. Our Lord puts it upon per-
 verseness of will, "*Ye will not come unto*
" me." It is not for want of power,
 grace, or favor. You have had all ima-
 ginable assurance, that you shall be aided in
 a right use of your powers. No motives,
 aids, or encouragements are wanting, in
 the *revelation*. Such doctrines are in-
 vented, by men, without any just founda-
 tion. "*You will not come to me.*" You
 have an immoderate love of the world, are
 excessive fond of pleasures of sense, interest,
 and

and honor; disregard the motives, which are offered, to influence you to the steady pursuit of sincere piety and real virtue.

SERM.
I.

Do not, therefore, delude yourselves, by imagining, that you shall have any color of excuse, at the great and awful day. You know that the dead will hear his voice, and receive their sentence from him. What will you then plead? Will you say, "Your nature was corrupt, and your temptations strong?" These are excuses, which will easily be answered, by the judge. May not he reply, "Have not I told you, that your rejecting me and my doctrine, would spring from your own obstinacy, from indulging yourselves in what was criminal? You hated my institution, because it was spiritual; and considered not the motives, or strength of the arguments, which I set before you. I opened to your view, life and immortality; represented to you the second death; and recommended nothing but what was good. I told you *that my yoke was easie, and my burthen light*. But you would not uprightly try, or exercise your powers

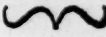
SERM. " powers aright, never called in my aid ;

I. " but yielded to the force of temptations.

~~~~~ " And, now you pretend that you did not  
 " entertain it ; because of some difficul-  
 " ties, when the true reason is, because  
 " you loved darkness rather than light.  
 " And, therefore, your condemnation will  
 " appear just to men and angels."

Thus it is evident, that the true rise of rejecting Christ and his doctrine, is not for want of power. For GOD has assured us that we shall receive aid from him : nay, he has sent his Son into the world, to give all the assistance, which the imperfection of our state, and variety of our temptations, required.

Let us then often and seriously put the question to ourselves, " What, if I should  
 " fall short of eternal life ; will not my  
 " distress be inexpressible ; when I might  
 " have attained heaven, and endless hap-  
 " piness ? Will not this point my grief,  
 " in that day ? " Let us, therefore, awaken ourselves to diligence, fight, strive, run, and neglect no means to attain such faith, repentance, and purity of heart and life, as the gospel requires ; and to which  
 there

there is a promise annexed of eternal life; SERM.  
fearing least, having such a promise, we I.  
should seem to come short. 

(4, *Lastly.*) Let us take care to persevere  
and continue faithful to the end.

We have the light of the gospel: the  
true light has shone with full splendor up-  
on us. We have the last and most perfect  
revelation; by which we are ascertained,  
not only of life and immortality; but of  
the way to it. We have all motives and  
incouragements to influence us. The doc-  
trine is worthy of GOD; the precepts are  
proper to make us happy here, as well as  
hereafter; the testimonies are various, and  
strong; and we have no ground to call the  
validity of them in question. Shall we not  
then be encouraged to persevere? Shall any  
difficulties dispirit us, when we have so  
many arguments to engage us? Let us hold  
out a little longer, and the conflict will  
for-ever have an end. Then shall we have  
perfect, and endless happiness; and never  
enter into a state of tryal any more. We  
shall, then, be as pillars in the heavenly  
temple; and shall have joys growing to  
endless ages. Amen!







## S E R M O N II.

The support of Christians, under  
trouble.



J O H N xiv. I.

*Let not your heart be troubled :  
ye believe in GOD, believe also  
in me.*

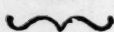


W H E N our Savior, in the pre- S E R M.  
ceding chapter, had men- II.  
tioned his departure from the  
apostles ; and they had given  
marks of extraordinary sorrow ; he does, in  
the words which I have read, recommend  
to them a duty, proper for them in their  
present circumstances ; and directs them  
to the arguments, which might prevail with  
them, and assist them, to comply with it.

*Let*

SERM. *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe*

II. *in GOD, believe also in me.*



In these words we have,

I. A duty recommended. *Let not your heart be troubled.*

II. Motives, by which the practice of it is pressed. *Ye believe in GOD, believe also in me. Or, believe ye in GOD, believe also in me.*

Here is,

I. A duty recommended. *Let not your heart be troubled.*

We are not to apprehend, that our Savior designs, by this exhortation, to restrain every degree of sorrow, when any thing befalls us, that is in its own nature distressing and afflictive. He knew, that his leaving his disciples, who had taken pleasure in his instructions and conversation, was a justifiable ground of expressing some degrees of tenderness and concern. Neither *reason*, nor *revelation*, favor a Stoical insensibility. Our Savior himself, when he looked upon *Jerusalem* and the temple, and called to mind how soon both  
would

would be destroyed, wept. We cannot, SERM.  
therefore, imagine that our Lord intended, II.

by these words, [*Let not your heart be troubled*] to take off his disciples from every emotion of concern and sorrow, let the occasion be what it will. But his view is, to prevent their grief from being immoderate and excessive. *Let not your heart be troubled.* "Be not overmuch concerned  
" for my telling you, that, in a little  
" time, I shall leave you, and go to my  
" Father. This will turn to your advantage, and is necessary to bring about  
" your happiness. Therefore moderate  
" and assuage your sorrow, and let not  
" your grief exceed all due and proper  
" bounds. You may reasonably discover  
" some measure of concern, when you hear  
" that, in a little while, I shall go from you.  
" But it is your duty to take care, that your  
" grief does not rise too high, break through  
" all bounds, and overwhelm your hearts."

Having thus explained the meaning of the exhortation in our text, I shall proceed,

II. To the motives, to which our Savior directs his disciples, in order to influence

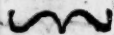
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D

them

SERM. them to the practice of it. *Believe ye in*

II. GOD, *believe also in me.*



And here it will be proper to consider,

1. What is implied in *believing in God.*

2. To shew you the strength of the arguments, which will arise from thence, to influence and ingage us to moderate our grief under affliction.

3. To represent what is intended by the expression, *believe also in me.*

4. To set before you the force of the arguments, which will result thence, to ingage us to moderate our grief, when we are under any afflictive providence.

1. I shall consider what is implied in *believing in God.*

By the term, GOD, we mean a Being, which exists by an absolute necessity of nature; and, of consequence, is eternal and immense. And since the other Beings, we converse with, are limited, variable, and dependent, they cannot be conceived to exist necessarily; but must have received their Being from another, who exists in that manner, to whom we give the name of GOD. And, since GOD must be

be apprehended to be the *creator*, we cannot but see, that he is the *proprietor* and *disposer* of all the Beings he has made.

And, in as much as there are evident traces of consummate wisdom, and perfect goodness, in the frame and structure of the world, it is reasonable to attribute these perfections to him who formed it. And, since it is absurd to imagine, that, when God created all things; and, as sovereign Lord of them, is every where present, all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful, he should neglect the direction and government of them; we cannot but apprehend, that, as he made all things, so he guides and governs them, with unerring skill, and perfect goodness. *To believe*, then, *in God*, is to give a firm assent, upon proper evidence, to the being and perfections of the first cause, who created and governs all things agreeably to the most perfect goodness, and most consummate wisdom. I come now,

2. To shew you the strength of the arguments, which will arise from thence, to influence and ingage us to moderate our grief under affliction.



SERM.

II.

When we know that trouble does not arise out of the dust, but proceeds from him, who is the Creator of all things, is it not reasonable to act, as *David* did, when we are afflicted, *to be dumb, and not open our mouths* in repining, and indecent expressions, because God has done it?

Do we own, that God is the proprietor of us, and of every blessing we enjoy? and shall we not think it fit to leave him to dispose of what he has an unalienable right to, as he pleases; without being dissatisfied with any instance of his conduct? Especially, when we profess to believe that the first settlement of things in creation, and the government, which God has exercised over them, since, have been, upon the whole, the effect of the highest wisdom, and greatest goodness? When we know that he does not willingly afflict the children of men; but always does it with the tenderness of an affectionate Father; and a kind and gracious intention to improve us in sincere piety and real holiness; is not impatience and excess of sorrow under affliction, in effect, calling into question the wisdom and goodness of divine provi-

providence? Let us, therefore, watch our spirits; and carefully guard against every excess of sorrow; as inconsistent with a firm belief of a wise and kind creator, and governor of the world; on whom we depend, and to whom we are indebted for every blessing.

SERM.

II.

3. I come now to represent what is intended by the expression, *Believe also in me.* i. e. "Entertain and receive me, as the *Messiah*, as a teacher sent from God, to open, in the clearest and fullest manner, his will. Imbrace my doctrine, which contains the strongest motives, and highest encouragements, to the practice of every virtue; and adhere to it, with steadfastness and constancy. Carefully consider the additional light which I have given to the principles of natural religion, to render them more effectual, and to prevail with you to perform every duty; and particularly to moderate and allay your sorrow, when under any circumstance of distress. *Let not your heart be troubled* with excessive grief. *Believe ye in God.* That will have a considerable influence to support

SERM. "you under tryals. *Believe also in me;*

II. "and my doctrine will furnish you with

"the clearest, and consequently strongest,

"arguments, to induce you to bring your

"affections under due and proper re-

"straints."

4. I procede to set before you the force of the arguments, that will result from hence, to moderate our grief, when we are under any afflictive providence.

(1.) REASON directs creatures, in distress, to apply to their maker for support: and the Christian religion gives us the highest encouragement to the practice of it.

*Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will; and it shall be done unto you. We are assured, by the doctrine of Christ, that the prayers, which we offer up to our heavenly Father, agreeable to the rules which are prescribed to us, will be heard: and we shall either escape the evil we fear; or, if it comes upon us, we shall*

shall be supported under it; till, in due SERM.  
time, it be removed. And it shall be II.  
finally over-ruled for our spiritual, and  
eternal welfare; if we behave in the way,  
which Christianity recommends.

Besides; excess of sorrow, attended with a consciousness of guilt, has a general tendency to weaken our confidence, and lessen our hope, that the prayers, which we offer up to God, will be efficacious and prevalent. For which reason, Christ tells his disciples, in the chapter where our text lies, that, since he was going to the Father, and would be their patron and advocate with him, whatever they should ask in his name, he would do it; *that the Father might be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. And, — verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* This is a doctrine peculiar to Christianity; and is a kind condescension, in order to scatter our fears, arising from a sense of guilt; and raise in us an humble confidence,



SERM. dence, that, upon our return, we shall  
 II. find favor; and, that our prayers will be  
 accepted. Though we should allow that  
 some few might have a clear, strong, and  
 steddy view of the goodness of God, and  
 his readiness to forgive, and to comfort  
 and support, under trouble, such, as in  
 numberless instances have offended him,  
 (which yet is a point not certain, and in-  
 disputable) we cannot suppose this to be  
 the case of the bulk of mankind, when  
 in circumstances of great distress, and un-  
 der a lively sense of their many offences.

The institution of a mediator is, there-  
 fore, as wise, as it is kind; especially, of  
 such a mediator, who is the Son of the  
 Father's love; at his right hand; in the  
 highest dignity, and greatest dearneſs to  
 him; and who is at the same time, not  
 unconcerned at the sufferings of his follow-  
 ers; but in that he himself hath suffered,  
 being tempted, he is able, and willing, to  
 succor them that are tempted. *Let not  
 your heart be troubled, believe ye in me.*  
 " Be firmly persuaded, that the prayers,  
 " which you present to the Father, in my  
 " name, will avail. I will be your pa-  
 " tron



“ tron and advocate ; and in me he is al- SERM. 2  
 “ ways well pleased.” II.

(2.) Experience teaches us, that exam-  
 ples have even greater force to direct and  
 influence our conduct, than precepts.

In this respect, we Christians have pe-  
 culiar advantage. The founder of our re-  
 ligion has, in all regards, set before us a  
 perfect and finished example ; and particu-  
 larly of the greatest patience under suffer-  
 ings, and of the highest resignation to the  
 will of his Father. Tho' he was a man  
 of sorrow and acquainted with grief ; tho'  
 his life was one intire scene of affliction ;  
 and his death attended with all the cir-  
 cumstances of tryal ; yet no unbecoming  
 expression dropt from him, no mark of  
 discontent appeared in his behavior. On  
 the contrary, he was brought as a lamb to  
 the slaughter, and as a sheep before her  
 shearers is dumb, so he opened not his  
 mouth, in any repining and discontented  
 language. *Not my will but thine be done.*  
*The cup, which my Father giveth me to*  
*drink, shall not I drink it ?* These expres-  
 sions discover the reverse, and express the  
 deep-

SERM. deepest, and most perfect resignation.

II. From this pattern, set us, by the only begotten Son of God, the Son of his love, in whom he was ever well pleased, even when he made his soul an offering for sin; —we clearly see that afflictions of themselves are not marks of the divine displeasure. There is this farther advantage of the example of Christ, that it is perfect, and will never mislead us; and is the pattern of him, who is represented to be the *wisdom of God*; and, of consequence, is conformable to the real truth and just value of things. Let us, therefore, when we are in trouble, carefully consider his behavior, in the like circumstances; and resolutely imitate his patience and submission to the will and providence of God.

(3.) *True reasoning* will lead us to apprehend the readiness of God to assist the sincerely good in the practice of virtue; especially, when attended with difficulties: but it is the peculiar advantage of the Christian religion, that therein we have a general and express promise of divine aid. The doctrine of Christ encourages us to

*come*

*come with an humble boldness, to the throne of* SERM.  
*grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find* II.  
*grace to help, in every time of need.* In  
this religion, we have all imaginable assu-  
rances given us, that *the grace of God*  
will be proportionable to the weight and  
pressure of the tryals, with which we are  
called to conflict.

When our Savior, in the text, dissuades  
his disciples from immoderate grief, at  
hearing of his departure, he comforts and  
supports them, by assuring them, *that he*  
*would give them another comforter, or advo-*  
*cate, even the Spirit of truth.* Again :  
—— *But now I go my way to him that sent*  
*me. And, because I have said these things*  
*unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*  
*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is ex-*  
*pedient for you, that I go away. For, if*  
*I go not away, the comforter will not come*  
*unto you. But if I depart, I will send*  
*him unto you.* Let not your heart then be  
oppressed with excess of grief; *I will not*  
*leave you comfortless, I will come to you.*

(4.) Though the light of nature, duly  
improved, might lead us (as I apprehend)  
by

SERM. by a train of just reasoning, to the acknow-

II.

legement of a future retribution, wherein a difference shall be made between the wicked and the good; yet it is the peculiar advantage of the Christian doctrine, that we have a clear and full assurance given us, of eternal life, and endless happiness, in the possession of that inheritance, which is reserved for us in heaven; if we abide in Christ, and are his faithful followers.

*Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel.* These are set before us, in all the circumstances, which are proper to give weight and force to their influence. They are proposed, as the rewards of favor, to be conferred on the sincerely pious, and good; *Upon them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality.*

What effect they had upon the apostles, scripture informs us, *We are troubled, on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not dismayed; always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus:—Knowing, that he,*  
*who*



who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us, also, by Jesus. For which cause, we faint not : but, though our outward man perish; yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

SERM.  
II.

Let not your heart be troubled, believe in me. I shall, indeed, leave you; and go to my Father. But I go to prepare a place for you, in my Father's house, where there are many mansions. And, if I go and prepare a place; I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that, where I am, there ye may be also.

(5, *Lastly.*) The Christian religion gives us express assurances that all the afflictions, which befall us here, shall bring about and accomplish our eternal welfare; if we bear them with becoming patience, and improve them for the increasing in us the virtues, which are necessary to render us meet for the heavenly kingdom.

*We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God; to them, who are called according to his purpose. And, —our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and*



SERM. *and eternal weight of glory. While we look,*  
 II. *not at the things which are seen; but at the*  
 ~~~~~ *things which are not seen. For the things,*  
which are seen, are temporal; but the things,
which are not seen, are eternal.

Having thus opened to you the arguments, which are implied in a firm belief in God, and a sincere faith in Christ, to bear up the mind under the heaviest pressure of afflictions;—I shall conclude this discourse, with making two or three remarks.

1. From what has been said, we may see the importance of improving our minds in the knowledge of religious principles; and of acting agreeably to them, in our conduct.

Such as attend not to the principles of religion, are as liable to trouble as others. And, when they are under the pressure of heavy afflictions, what have they to support them? Nay; what reflections can they make, that, will not add to their distress? On the contrary, when one wave of affliction succeeds another; and they

they appear to be in danger of being quite overwhelmed; the righteous are buoyed up, by the principles of religion; to the truth of which they have seen reason, upon the exactest examination, to give their assent. SERM.
II.

2. From what has been offered, we may infer the peculiar advantage of the Christian revelation; in the arguments, which it sets before us, to bear us up under the heaviest tryals, which can befall us in this life.

The motives to patience, which *the religion of nature* offers, have considerable force. But Christianity has added weight to them; and given us new ones, which we should not have had any knowledge of, if they had not been discovered in the Christian revelation.

3. Let us, from this discourse, be prevailed with, to take care that we moderate our sorrow, and rein our passions, under the afflictions, which happen to us, in this state.

When our grief rises too high (as it certainly does, when it occasions in us unworthy

SERM. worthy thoughts of GOD and his govern-

II.

ment, when rash and repining expressions escape our lips; when thereby we are rendered unfit for the service of GOD, and *man.*) Let us thus chide ourselves; "Is

" this the temper and behavior becoming

" me, who profess to believe in GOD;

" who, as the creator, is the rightful pro-

" prietor and disposer of me; and of eve-

" ry blessing, which I have received from

" him? Do not I own, that he is righte-

" ous and good, in all his ways? Am not

" I a disciple and follower of Christ, who

" has given me an example of the highest

" patience? how unsuitable to such a

" character is immoderate and excessive

" grief? Do I profess myself a pilgrim

" and stranger, and an expectant of *a city,*

" *whose builder and maker is GOD?* And

" shall I not take care to demean myself

" in a manner suitable to such a profes-

" sion; when under any affliction? espe-

" cially, when I know, the tryals, with

" which I am called to incounter, are

" from my Father; with a gracious de-

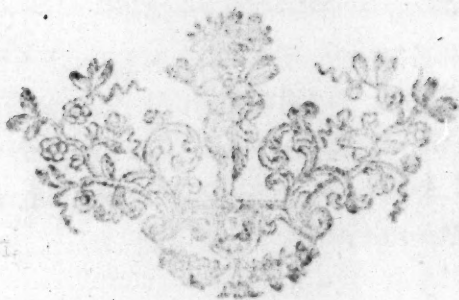
" sign, to train me up, by them, to a

" meet-

“ meetness for the heavenly inheritance. SERM.
“ And I am sure, he is ready to assist II.
“ me to improve them, for that pur-
“ pose. Let not, therefore, my heart
“ be troubled, with excess of sorrow.
“ *Believe in GOD, believe also in Jesus*
“ *Christ.* That is the way to support
“ and comfort, here. That is the way
“ to everlasting happiness, hereafter.”



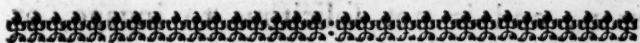
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 "Add I am sure, he is ready to assist
 "me to improve them, for that pur-
 "pose. Let not, therefore, my heart
 "be troubled, with excess of sorrow.
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 "and comfort, here. That is the way
 "to everlasting happiness, hereafter."





S E R M O N III.

The fear of man, a snare.



PROV. xxix. 25.

*The fear of man bringeth a snare :
but whoſo puteth his truſt in the
Lord, ſhall be ſafe.*



SHALL endeavor to ex- SERM.
plain this *Aphorism*. And, III.
then, make remarks, which
may be of uſe to direct our
conduct.

I. I ſhall endeavor to ſet the ſenſe of this
Proverb in a clear light. *The fear of*
man ſtands to ſignifie a concern not to do
any thing, that is diſpleaſing to any of
thoſe, with whom we converſe. Such a

SERM. disposition, if it be under due restraints, is

III. the foundation of a true and regular conduct. It is necessary to maintain this concern; or else the behavior of one to another will not be agreeable to reason and the fitness of things.

Whoever has abandoned all regard to men; and is not solicitous to ingage, or oblige, has a disposition, which is quite the reverse, to what ought to be cultivated and improved. We see, indeed, all men are desirous that others should avoid what would displease them. And it is easy to discern, that, in consequence, it must be binding upon themselves. For they can never imagine that another likes being treated unkindly, any more than they do. And, therefore, to be solicitous not to displease, is what becomes every one to maintain and support. And no external circumstances can weaken this obligation. For endeavoring to please is an obligation, which arises from our reasonable make; and from conversing with those that are in our nature. As arising from these circumstances, it will ever be binding. And no one but must see that outward circumstances cannot

not alter the immutable nature of things. SERM.
But, though this be a principle, from III.
whence regular behavior will arise; it may go
too far; and may carry us into an extreme.
And, when the fear of offending another is
excessive and inordinate, the wise man
tells us, the consequence will be, "that
"such, as have this irregular fear, will fall
"into snares." It will, however, be re-
quisite and necessary to settle, when the
fear of offending another is immoderate,
and goes beyond its proper bounds. And,
I think, we may easily settle this. For
whoever, by a fear of disobliging, says or
does any thing inconsistent to moral duty,
and to the offices of life, that are of import-
ance, he must be looked upon as having
an exorbitant and immoderate *fear*.

Truth and *Virtue* are of the last conse-
quence. Whenever, therefore, the fear
of others carries us to betray important
truth; or to do any thing contrary to those
duties, that are of eternal and immutable
obligation; we may, with very great just-
ness, say, that such a fear of displeasing is
inordinate.

SERM.

III.

It is a little surprizing, how far an excess of desire to please men will occasion the giving up of truth, that is of the last consequence. I believe there are none, who have, with care, attended to the conduct of mankind, but must have observed, that, through an excess of desire to please, persons have varied in their sentiments, almost times innumerable. Indeed, some are so very complaisant, that they will, in one company, express their assent to such a principle of truth: and perhaps, in the next, give it up for the same reason.

Nothing has occasioned persons to be more fickle and inconstant, than the fear of offending those they converse with. There are, indeed, some things, that are true, which are of no great consequence. And we need not express any great anxiety, or solicitude, in their defence. There is, undoubtedly, a stiffness in expressing adherence to our own sentiments, which is neither agreeable to the imperfection of our state, nor suited at all to the character of politeness. But, though this be granted; surely, all truth is not to be surrendered. This cannot be agreeable to our characters,

as Beings, capable of arriving at truth, SERM.
which is of considerable consequence to III.
our perfection and happiness. He; there-
fore, who has an excessive fear of man,
will find that this will be the occasion of
his giving up truths of great moment.

But, besides this, we shall find that an
excessive fear of men will have an unhappy
influence upon the conduct. How often
do we find persons, who have an immo-
derate fear of others, say and act what,
upon reflection, they cannot but own to
be disagreeable to righteousness and good-
ness; and to that love of God, and re-
gard to him, to which we are strongly
obliged.

Sometimes, men in high circumstances,
and of great power, think that others are
to give into every scheme, which they
have framed; and to have no other prin-
ciples than what they themselves enter-
tain. There is a strong propensity in man-
kind to play the tyrant. When some men
are angry with others, they immediately
expect all to interest themselves in the
same. And this draws persons into a
conduct, disagreeable to what a righteous

SERM.

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be disagreeable to righteousness and goodness;
and to that love of God, and regard to him,
to which we are strongly obliged.

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and of great power, think that others are
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the tyrant. When some men are angry with
others, they immediately expect all to interest
themselves in the same. And this draws
persons into a conduct, disagreeable to what
a righteous

SERM. cause injoins and recommends. We are
 III. never to be governed, even by friendship,
 in any instance of behavior, which, upon
 reflection, we cannot but discern to be disagreeable to that, which is the constant rule of our conduct. *Truth* and *virtue* are never to be sacrificed to any. We are to defend both; and in a manner, that may be best, and most calculated to recommend the one to the understanding, and the other to the practice, of those with whom we converse. There is a strange power in self-flattery. And, because we think we are right, in every passion; (when, perhaps, we are at a great remove from it;) we imagine that others must agree to every turn of thought, and passion, which we feel in ourselves. Undoubtedly, this is wrong. And such a fear of disobliging, as leads men to this slavish, abject behaviour towards others, will never fail of being attended with a wrong temper, and as wrong a practice.

Some, from an immoderate desire of pleasing, will sacrifice the principles of religion and virtue. And, if they are so unhappy, as to mingle with persons vitious
 and

and powerful ; they cannot withstand yielding up to those persons all that is sacred. SERM. III.

Such an immoderate fear of man will lead us into snares. And it does so, when it occasions us to act unbecoming the dignity of our reasonable make ; and unsuitable to the character, which we bear in life.

It sometimes brings persons into great difficulties, and is the unhappy occasion of miseries, in this present state. But, as it is attended with a violation of the duties, which are immutable and of eternal obligation, so it will unavoidably expose us, hereafter, to snares, that are of the most unhappy tendency imaginable.

You see, then, what is meant by *the fear of man*, viz. a fear to offend : which, if it is under a due regulation, is the source of many virtues. But, when it is not duly regulated, leads to many vices.

We are, by *the fear of man* (here, in this proverb) to understand, a fear of offending, that is immoderate and inconsistent to the love of truth, and the practice of virtue. This exorbitant fear brings forth many vices, and exposes us to many snares and difficulties, in this life ; and to
a just

SERM. a just punishment from the great governor
 III. of the world, in a future state.

I now procede to the opposite part of this aphorism; *But whoſo putteth his truſt in the Lord, ſhall be ſafe.*

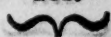
There are many, who miſtake the nature of a due dependence upon GOD. They go on raſhly; and imagine that, though they are not careful to act as becomes reaſonable Beings, they have ground to expreſs their truſt in, and dependence upon, GOD. But this is certainly wrong. No one can rationally truſt in GOD, who does not expreſs a dependence upon him, in that way, which *reaſon* and *revelation* preſcribe. We may eaſily ſee this in a common inſtance of life. When we diſcern any to have no oeconomy, no application to buſineſs: but, on the contrary, to give themſelves up to indolence and vice; and yet ſaying, *They truſt in GOD and depend upon his providence*;——every one ſees the weakneſs and unjuſtifiableneſs of ſuch a pretence. *Truſting in the Lord* (after we have behaved, as becomes reaſonable Beings) is to expreſs a dependence upon him, who is the creator and governor of the world.

The

The text teaches us what will be the event, or what will arise out of such a conduct. And so the opposition between the two parts of this proverb will appear with clearness. *The fear of man bringeth a snare*; but (after we have practised what becomes us; and there does arise a fear of displeasing men in high characters of life) we may very fitly depend upon him, who is the governor of the world, and who has the direction and guidance of all things, that he will take us under his protection, and guard us from the ill consequences of displeasing men of power. In this case, *Trusting in God* implies a firm persuasion of his providence and government; and that agreeably to the assurances, which he has given us, of his protection; and that he does guide and direct persons and things. And, as this is a principle very consonant to *reason*, and is expressly ascertained in *revelation*, we cannot but discern, that those, who from a love of truth, and a practice conformed thereto, have no regard to men, so as to fear what they can do to them; while they continue in the steady practice of real virtue;—Such persons,

SERM.

III.



SERM. persons, I say, may very rationally *put*

III. *their trust in the Lord*; and they need not doubt but that they *shall be safe*. The Hebrew word, which we translate [*shall be safe*] signifies *shall be set on high*; which carries the argument a little farther than our translation. He, that puteth his trust in the Lord, shall not only be safe and secure, he shall not only avoid falling into snares; but *he shall be exalted*.

It is easy to discern the excellent and beautiful character of him, that has such a love of truth and virtue, as not to betray the one or the other; who, also, trusteth in God, and dependeth upon the governor of the world, for his protection and favor. Such a character is so amiable; that it will ever occasion esteem, and will, frequently, be the means of advancement.—This I take to be the true sense of the aphorism.

II. Give me leave to make some remarks upon it, which may be of use to direct our conduct.

I. We

1. We may see with what care we should govern every affection, or every passion, that is placed in us. SERM. III.

A want of this, is the occasion of many irregularities, which we see practised in the world.

Fear is that, which needs to be under restraint; as well as other passions. It is, indeed, placed in us to excite our care and diligence to avoid whatever may be really prejudicial to us. But then, we must carefully consider what is a real prejudice to us.

We have no reason to treat any in our make with disregard. *We should make no one our enemy.* But then, this must be understood consistently with the love and practice of truth. For we are not to give up, to any one, those duties that are of immutable and eternal obligation. Such a fear of displeasing, or offending man, as excites us to a conduct, that is beneficent and kind, is highly fit and binding upon us. But, when *fear* is carried to a great height, and we become base and abject, and have such a lowness of mind, as, rather than offend, to give up what is most sacred;

SERM. sacred; we certainly, by such a fear, are
 III. guilty of doing that which is unsuitable to
 our make; and contrary to the duty,
 which *reason* and *revelation* both injoin.
 Every passion is to be under proper re-
 straint and government.

2. I would remark farther; it is now
 no surprize, that all writers, upon moral
 virtue, have made *Fortitude* so eminent a
 part of it, or a *cardinal* virtue.

We are to carry this a good deal farther
 than many, at first, apprehend. We are
 ready to think *Fortitude* is discovered only
 in the field of battle; where resolution
 and bravery are, indeed, required. But;
 in common life, there are many occasions
 of expressing a becoming courage and *for-
 titude* of mind.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than
 for a man to be daunted in an army;
 and, when he is near his end, to sink, in
 the lowest manner, under *the fear of death*.
 And, to hear a man discourse of bravery;
 and, at the same time, to see that he has
 an inordinate fear of his fellow-creatures;
 that he has not the courage to speak one
 word in favor of truth, or religion, or of
 the

the great governor of the world; when SERM.
mingled in society, where piety and virtue III.
are (or, at least, are attempted to be) in-
sulted and ridiculed.—Surely, there can-

not be a greater discovery of weakness of mind, than thus to give up what is of the greatest importance; purely because (forsooth) they will not offend. What! shall we choose to offend our creator; and act quite disagreeably to all the rules of virtue; rather than displease our fellow-creatures? Is there any rational foundation for such a conduct? Do we not do great disservice to mankind, by such a behavior: though we may please some particular persons? A reasonable Nature ought to weigh things and be prepared (by a thorough attention, and serious consideration) for a behavior, that is wise, and suitable to the dignity of our make.

Can any one do greater disservice to men, than to betray the most important interest of our nature? What is more unreasonable than to injure mankind in general, by attempting to please one, or a few? Courage must, certainly, be supported and maintained, in opposition to an
exces-

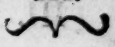
SERM. excessive fear of man. And whoever will attend, and make proper observations upon it, will easily see, that there is need of a becoming resolution to pass through this life, in a way agreeable to the character of a man of piety and virtue.

III.

He that, by a fear of offending, is led to any thing base, and below a reasonable Being; or to a behavior contrary to what is of eternal obligation, must be considered as one, who acts intirely against the rules of a reasonable conduct.

3. I would farther remark, that they, who have it in their power, by external circumstances, to make others feel the effects of their displeasure, for differing in sentiments from them, ought to consider (if they make that use of their power) how much they contribute to the quantity of moral evil in the world.

It is the effect of divine goodness to them, that any are in higher circumstances than others. But they must not, in consequence, imagine, that they may indulge exorbitant passions, and act as they please. They should reflect that they may mistake. And, if they insist upon others professing the

the same sentiments with them, they are SERM.
discouraging of that virtue; without which III.
truth, and piety, and real excellency cannot subsist in the world. 

4. We must not imagine that there is true courage in every thing that looks bold.

Nothing is more difficult than to settle moral virtue, so, as to guard against both excesses.

When some people hear of *courage*, they imagine that they have a right to shew resolution, in maintaining every thing they say; and, in such a manner, that a person cannot but look on with regret. At the same time, that they discover courage; they, through mistake, fall into great weakness and folly. It is no true courage, to have an affronting carriage, and manner of conversation, run through the whole train of our actions. We are to be beneficent and kind, and disposed to do good, as far as it is in our power. But effrontry will in time introduce habits, quite the reverse to that beneficence and goodness, which is the true embellishment of the reasonable nature. Let us be care-

SERM. ful to settle the notion of every virtue right,
 III. in our own minds, that we may not mistake false courage, for that which is true, and wise, and good.

COURAGE does not consist in a rashness of temper and behavior. It arises out of *reason*; and is consistent with the fitness of things; and does not contradict any other branch of our duty.

Religious virtue is attended with happy effects; in freeing us from an excess of passions, that are extremely uneasy. Particularly, the fear of God; a regard to the rules of virtue, which he has discovered to us; and a dependence upon his providence, in acting agreeably to them; will deliver us from that excessive fear of man, which would be attended with very unhappy consequences. *Religion* directs us to GOD, the properest object of fear and regard, and thereby cures those passions, which are irregular; and which occasion great uneasiness and chagrin of mind.

5. How unjust is it for any man to pretend to trust in GOD, whilst he neglects his duty?

To

To offend him, and trust in him, appears to be exceedingly absurd. To run counter to his laws; and yet to expect his protection; to violate all the offices of virtue, that are recommended to us, by him, who is the governor of the world, and yet to hope for his favor:—These are so inconsistent, that even the very mentioning of them makes it appear that a pretension to trust in God, when we knowingly violate his precepts, is rash and groundless.

6. How unreasonable is it to assert that “*Fear* was the first rise of religion; and “that fear made God?”

It might, perhaps, make those *false Gods*, which the heathens worshiped. But, concerning the *true* God, it is intirely false. For *reason* as well as *revelation*, assures us that he, who made the world in wisdom and consummate goodness, does always exercise a kind care over it; and a regard to those particularly, who with a steady resolution and courage perform the duty, which the creator has recommended. If, therefore, I do my duty, I have no reason to fear men: because I depend up-

SERM. on him, who in goodness directs and governs all things; and in whose protection I am very safe.

III.

7. We may see the happy tendency of all virtue.

It makes us easy and happy: it raises in others an esteem for us; and, at last, brings us to be perfectly happy in a future world.

There are happy fruits springing from every virtue, in this life. And there are ill consequences, that attend vice. Immoderate and unreasonable fear of man draws into snares; and sometimes into vice. On the contrary, virtue, in a firm dependence upon God, raises those, that practise it, to high esteem, here, in this life: and will undoubtedly, in another, have eternal happiness, as a reward.

To conclude, therefore, this discourse. Let me recommend to you trusting in God, in all things: And to get rid of an immoderate fear of man, subsequent to your steady practice of real piety and extensive virtue.

It is ridiculous to trust in God in any other way. But, when you are sincere
in

in your desires to practise real piety and virtue, you have reason to depend upon God. And is he not the governor? Are not many events surprizing? Does he not raise some, and depress others? What occasion have we to fear *man*, when we do our duty, and trust in God? SERM. III.

“ But (you may say) do not good men “ fall under oppression?” No doubt of it. But then, they have the pleasure of being conscious of doing what they judge to be right. And they have, in consequence of their integrity, an assurance that the governor of the world will either free them from oppression, or support them under it. And they have reason, from their consciousness of loving truth and virtue, to be satisfied that they shall, some time or other, have the advantage and reward. By a steady practice of piety and virtue, their experience convinces them, that, sometimes in this life, things turn in their favor. But, though the scene varies, nothing of virtue must be given up. *That* must be pursued steadily. No fear of man ought ever to take us off from that. And when we have done nothing,

SERM. that we are conscious of, but what has
III. been consistent with virtue; if we have not

any thing oppressive redressed in this life; we have just reason to commit all things to a righteous judge. And we know that there is a time approaching; when the things, that appear in a wrong light, shall be set in a distinct view. We see in many instances, in this world, that corrections are a part of the government of God. But it is highly proper that these should not, at present, universally take place. For this is not a state of rewards and punishments. And, of consequence, it must be such a government, as shall leave sufficient evidence of another state, in which the perfections of the great governor of the world, shall be conspicuous; and those seeming inconsistencies shall intirely be cleared up, and made plainly appear to be agreeable to the perfections which we ascribe to God. Let us, therefore, steddily practise what is true and virtuous. Let this be our daily pursuit. Let us love righteousness, and cultivate goodness, in imitation of him whose goodness is diffused through all the works of his hands.

And

And let us not be cast down, about events, SERM.
whatever may befall us, in this life. That III.
would be the spring of excessive fear. For, }
when men take a view of this world, in
itself, abstractly from all consideration of
the creator and governor, it is enough to
fill them with inexpressible fear. This
world, then, seems to be like a tempestu-
ous sea. And, if there was not one to
steer, no one would care to embark upon
it. It must fill every breast with immoderate fear. But taking into our thoughts
a wise governor, that directs all things,
calms those uneasy passions; gives us
tranquillity of mind; and enables us to
pass through this life, in a way that is
consistent with as much happiness as this
state will admit of. This shews the excellency of religious principles, and of the
practice of virtue. And every one, by
close reflection, may see that to have a
wise, and powerful, and kind Being to
preside, and overrule all things, must minister just foundation of inward joy. And
therefore it is, with justness, that the
*Psalmist says, The Lord reigneth; let the
earth rejoice.*

SERM.

III.

Who could take a view of kings and ministers of state; their interests, and temptations to gain what would be attended with very ill consequences to others, in a lower rank; without having some fear in his mind? But, when we reflect that he, who made the world, does govern it; and see instances of surprizing providence; the mind becomes perfectly easy. And, going on in the pursuit of virtue, it may leave all events to the great governor of the world: trust in him; and pass as calmly through the world, as those principles will allow. This is the view we ought to take of things. It will strengthen our resolution, and animate us in the constant practice of piety and virtue; free us from that *fear of man which bringeth a snare*; and teach us to *put our trust in the Lord*, that all may be safe.

S E R-



S E R M O N IV.

The terms of the Christian's reward.

2 TIM. ii. 11, 12, 13.

It is a faithful saying. For if we be dead with him ; we shall, also, live with him.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him : if we deny him ; he, also, will deny us.

If we believe not ; yet he abideth faithful : he cannot deny himself.



HIS is one of the last of St. Paul's epistles. When the apostle wrote it, he was in strict custody at Rome. And, knowing that Timothy

SERM.
IV.

SERM. *motby* (whom he had left at *Ephesus*) was

IV. under considerable difficulties, on account of the vigorous opposition, made to his doctrine, by the *Judaizing teachers*, he wrote this letter, to animate and encourage him *to hold fast the form of sound words, which he had imparted to him*; whatever difficulties he might, in such a course of preaching, be exposed to. In the beginning of this chapter, he exhorts him, as his son, in the tenderest and most affectionate manner, *to be strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS*; or in the gospel, which he had received from him, the apostle of the gentiles; and which he had had by immediate revelation from CHRIST.

He recommends to him, *to commit that doctrine to faithful men, who should be able to understand and keep it themselves, and to teach others also*. And, since he was to encounter with difficulties, he exhorts him *to indure hardness, as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST*. And adjures him to take care that he kept himself disintangled from all the affairs of this life, since no one, who wareth, intangleth himself with such concerns; that he may please him
who

who hath chosen him to be a foldier. SERM.
 And (using the figurative expression, in IV.
 the following verse; and alluding to the
 games, celebrated among the *Greeks*) he
 exhorts him to take care that he, in his
 instructions, had a constant respect to the
 pure revelations, which he had from him.
 For (says he) *if a man strive for mastery;*
yet is he not crowned, except he strive law-
fully. And whoever engages in such work,
 must expect to incounter great difficul-
 ties, and to undergo considerable toil.
 But this should not discourage him, any
 more than such labor discourages the hus-
 bandman; who goes through considerable
 toil, before he can be capable of partak-
 ing of the fruits of the earth. He ex-
 horts *Timothy* with care to attend to what
 he had wrote to him: and adds that *the*
Lord would give him, by such a careful at-
 tention, *understanding in all things.*

The Apostle having represented himself
 as a pattern to *Timothy*, he now puts him
 in mind of calling into his thoughts fre-
 quently the highest example; viz. that
 which *Jesus the Messiah*, of the seed of
David, had set before him. He, with
 the

SERM. the greatest chearfulness, underwent the

IV. death of the cross, in obedience to the

will of his father. And, in consequence, was raised from the dead, to sit at the right-hand of him who sent him; invested with all power and dignity.

This was a very powerful motive to animate *Timothy* to be diligent, in his work, and faithful in the exercise of it. For, though he should suffer on that account, he should be raised, as his master was; and to a proportionable degree of honor and dignity.

Ver. 9, 10. He represents himself, again, as an example. "For this cause
 " I suffer tribulation, and am looked upon
 " as an evil-doer: so that I not only sustain affliction; but fall under disrepute;
 " upon the account of my being a teacher
 " of the *Gentiles*. And my sufferings arise
 " even unto bonds, at *Rome*. But remember that the word of God, the
 " gospel, is not bound. And, for this
 " reason, I chearfully indure all things
 " for the elects sake."

He had before spoken of himself, as *apostle of the Gentiles*; and had declared,
 it

it was on that account, that he suffered. SERM.
IV.
Therefore, by *the Eleēt*, we are to under-
stand, in particular, the *Gentile converts*.

For it was on their account, or on the account of preaching the Gospel unto them, that he was now under so strict a confinement at *Rome*. *I sustain these things, for the eleēts sake, that they may attain the salvation, which is in (or by) CHRIST JESUS; i. e. according to the doctrine of CHRIST.* And especially, as I am, by divine revelation, appointed to preach it unto the gentiles, *with eternal glory*. And then, follow the words, which we have read. *It is a faithful saying. For, if we be dead with him; we shall, also, live with him.*

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him; he, also, will deny us.

If we believe not; yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.

In these words, we have

I. A representation given us of the rewards of the Christian doctrine; and of the terms, upon which those rewards are
to

SERM. to be attained. *If we be dead with him ;*

IV. *we shall, also, live with him. If we suffer ;
we shall, also, reign with him. If we deny
him ; he also will deny us.*

II. We have an intimation of the fitness of giving credit to this declaration of future rewards ; and of the way of attaining them. *It is a faithful saying.*

III. We have the ground, upon which the credibility of these things are built. *If we believe not ; yet he abideth faithful ; he cannot deny himself.*

Under these heads, we shall attempt to explain the words ; and then make practical reflections.

I. We have a declaration given us of the rewards, which the gospel has brought to light ; and of the terms, upon which they are to be attained.

If we be dead with him ; we shall also live with him.

Interpreters differ in the explication of the words, *if we be dead with him.*

Dr. Whitby apprehended the sense to be, *If we have died with him, in baptism, by dying unto sin.* And this sense is favor-

ed

Christian's reward.

79

ed Rom. vi. 5,—8. *For, if we have been* **SERM.**
planted together, in the likeness of his death; **IV.**
we shall be also, [planted together] in the
likeness of his resurrection.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him: that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he, that is dead, is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with CHRIST; we believe that we shall, also, live with him.

When those, who first imbraced the religion of Christ, were baptized, they were like to Christ, in his burial; and conformed to his death. And, therefore, the Apostle strongly recommended it to the Roman christians, not to yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but to yield themselves unto God, as those, that were *alive from the dead*. And, ver. 10. the apostle says of Christ; *For, in that he died, he died unto sin, once: or* (as it might have been rendered) *he died once for sin, to put it away. But, in that he liveth, he liveth unto God, to his honor; and in the possession of the highest dignity and glory with him.*

When,

SERM. When, therefore, the apostle says, *If*

IV. *we be dead with Christ, we shall also live*
 together *with* him; his meaning may be,
 “ If we are conformed to his death, by
 “ dying unto sin; and to his resurrection,
 “ by rising to newness of life; we shall
 “ live with him in a future state of hap-
 “ piness.” The glory, which our Savior
 has, at the right hand of God, is indeed
 peculiar to him. When he, in compli-
 ance with the will of his father, had ta-
 bernacled here among men, passed thro’
 scenes of sorrow; expired and died; the
 father raised him from the dead; and con-
 ferred upon him a reward of being head
 of angels and men; and communicated
 to him all power, in heaven and earth.
 Universal and perpetual dominion was com-
 mitted, by the father, to him. He now
 is in the possession of the highest glory
 and greatest happiness. And to those, that
 live not to sin, but to holiness, or in con-
 formity to his precepts, the promise is
 given, that they shall, after being raised
 from the dead, be taken to the place
 where Christ now is; and put in pos-
 session of honor, and dignity, and hap-
 piness

pinefs;—fuch felicity, as fhall be perfect SERM.
and interminable. But, then, in order IV.
to attain this, it is neceffary that we be 
dead to fin, and alive unto holinefs: or, in
other words, that our faith in the Mefſiah
be attended with a fincere and conſtant
obedience to his commands.

This is the ſenſe which ſeveral very
confiderable critics give of the firſt clauſe
of our text. Others indeed apprehend
that we are to take the phraſe [*dead with
him*] to expreſs ſuffering for his ſake, or on
the account of his religion. And, indeed,
this is a part of the condition, to which
the doctrine of Chriſt has promiſed eternal
happinefs, in a future world. 2 Cor. iv.
8; 10. We are *troubled on every ſide*; yet
not diſtreſſed. We are *perplexed, but not
in deſpair*. *Perſecuted, but not forſaken*:
caſt down, but not deſtroyed. *Always bear-
ing about, in the body, the dying of the
Lord Jeſus*;—The apoſtle is ſpeaking
of the conſtant ſufferings, which he
underwent, for the ſake of Chriſt; and
calls it, *bearing about in the body, the dy-
ing of the Lord Jeſus*; i. e. his undergo-
ing great ſufferings, and danger of death;

SERM. on the account of Christ's doctrine; *that*
 IV. *the life of Jesus might be made manifest in*
 his mortal flesh. The meaning is, that
 Christ, living at the right hand of God,
 in all power and authority, might be evi-
 denced in him, by his ready submitting to
 such sufferings for Christ's sake; who,
 though he was crucified, is now at the
 right hand of the father. And from
 him the apostle received those gifts of
 the spirit, by which he was enabled to
 sustain the sufferings; which were a full
 proof that Christ, who was crucified, is
 now at the right hand of God, Rom.
 viii. 17. *If children, then heirs; heirs of*
God, and joint-heirs with CHRIST: if
so be that we suffer with him [that is, suf-
 fer as he did; for the sake of that truth,
 which is revealed from God:] *that we*
may, also, be glorified together. I Pet iv.
 13. *But rejoice, in as much as ye are par-*
takers of CHRIST's sufferings:—where it
 is evident, that the sufferings, which the
 first Christians were called to undergo,
 for the sake of the Christian Religion, is
 represented as *the sufferings of CHRIST*;
 and they, that underwent them, were par-
 taker

takers of them. *That when his glory shall be reveled; ye, also, may be glad with exceeding joy.* SERM. IV.

These passages I have produced, to shew you, that [*If we are dead with him*] may stand to express the sufferings, which they, who were to spread the Christian religion, were called to undergo. And very often they had a view of death, and submitted to it, on the account of Christ, or of his doctrine. And that was, with propriety of expression, represented to be *a dying with Christ, or being dead with him*; when those sufferings were sustained for his sake, and on the account of his doctrine.

Ver. 12. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.*

If we suffer: Some apprehend that here the apostle had a respect to Rev. xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he, that hath part in the first resurrection: on such, the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of GOD, and of CHRIST, and shall reign with him, a thousand years.* They think the apostle had his eye upon the *Millennium*, when CHRIST will raise those, that were his servants, and that suffered for

SERM. the sake of his doctrine. *And they shall*

IV. *reign with him, a thousand years*; antecedent to the general resurrection. And

what makes them entertain this opinion, is, that here it is said, *They shall reign with him*. Whereas, 1 Cor. xv. 24, &c. CHRIST, after the general resurrection and judgment, shall resign the kingdom to the father: and then he shall be *all in all*.

I shall not pretend absolutely to determine this point. It appears to me to be a too restrained and limited sense of the words. For the apostle seems here to lay down the necessary terms of every Christian's attaining the rewards, promised, in a future state. For as to the other sense, it has respect unto those, who shall enjoy the *millennium*, and to them alone. It seems, therefore, more agreeable to the design of the apostle, to understand him as speaking of Christians, in general, suffering for the sake of Christ, and being, rewarded by him. For *the participation of glory* denotes being with CHRIST, in a more large sense; in a state of endless happiness and glory.

If

If we suffer, we shall also reign with SERM.
him. Now Christians are looked upon, IV.
as the refuse of the world. But, when
CHRIST shall reward them, they shall
have assured glory and honor. Now they
are called to suffer ; but then they shall
be where Christ is, without ever being
called out any more to any state of trial.

We must remark the opposition, which
there is, in the stile of the apostle, if we
would attain right ideas of what he has
written. And here he adds, *If we deny*
him, he will also deny us. This has a re-
spect to what our savior says, Matt. x.
33. *Whosoever shall deny me before men ;*
him will I, also, deny before my father, who
is in heaven. So, Luke ix. 26. *For who-*
soever shall be ashamed of me, and of my
words ; of him shall the son of man be a-
shamed, when he shall come in his own glory
and in his father's [glory,] and [in the glory]
of the holy angels. It was a necessary term
to expect a reward, that they should pro-
fess his doctrine, and not reject and dis-
regard it, though it should render them
obnoxious even to death. To such as do
not receive this doctrine, when clearly re-

SERM. presented to them; and to those, who,
 IV. after imbracing it, abandon and forsake
 it; Christ will say, at the great day, *I know you not.* It is necessary that we adhere to this doctrine, just as it is imparted to us; that we make a constant profession of it; and act agreeably to its precepts; if we would attain to the reward promised.

II. Those rewards, and the terms of attaining them, are worthy of credit. *This is a faithful saying.* Some suppose, that, when the apostle had mentioned *salvation through CHRIST*, he adds, “*It is a faithful saying*: it is what you may depend upon, and what you may express the highest expectation of. But then you must take care to comply with the terms laid down in this doctrine. These are what deserve your respect, and demand your credit.”

In order to make this appear, I shall represent to you, that both the rewards, which the Christian doctrine has opened to our view; and the terms, upon which the attainment of them may be expected; are

are reasonable. And, if such, they then, SERM.
upon that account, deserve our belief. IV.

That they are reasonable, will (I think) appear evident. *Reason*, unaided by *revelation*, will make it very probable, that there will be a future state of retribution. The *Christian* doctrine has set this in a fuller and clearer light; and has represented to us, that the rewards consist in pure knowledge and virtuous enjoyments. Now who are they to whom such glory and happiness are promised? To such as believe upon evidence, in consequence of a careful examination; and so are influenced to the practice of all piety and virtue. They are such, as, if they have deviated from the rule, look upon themselves to be under obligations of returning, and of practising the contrary virtue. They are such, as, with the utmost integrity, undo (as much as is in their power) the unhappy effects, which have risen from their misbehavior; and endeavor to act what becomes them, as reasonable Beings, to their *creator*, to *others*, and to *themselves*. Such as love truth, and practise righteousness, and will not sacrifice their consciences to

SERM. any thing here below ; who would rather

IV. part with their lives, than represent that
 to be false, which they know to be true. They are such, as (knowing that many imperfections attend this life) are ever upon their guard ; and watch, as well as pray, that they may avoid those snares, which abound in this state. They persevere, and continue stedfast ; and will not, by all the allurements of the objects of this world, or by the terrors of it, be taken off from a steady performance of those offices, which they see to arise from their reasonable nature.

Could any terms be more reasonable ? They are such as stand inseparably connected with the pure and virtuous rewards of another world. And, therefore, it is groundless to say, “ that the Christian religion is mercenary.” This is said with an ill grace, and very unjustly. Cannot we do virtuously, in hope that we shall be settled in such habits of piety and virtue, in another state ; as that we shall not be under the least temptation to deviate from it ?

There

There is only one difficulty : and it is SERM.
IV.
this. “ How can the term, of suffering
“ and dying, become binding upon us ;
“ when there is a law in our make, to
“ preserve ourselves ? ”

We find, in many circumstances, the law of self-preservation, not only may, but ought to, be superseded. If we are walking with a friend, who is attacked ; do not we all think it a just occasion of reproach, to desert such a one ; though we expose ourselves ? Surely, then, it is but fit that we lay down our lives for the Christian religion. The founder of this doctrine gives us liberty to secure ourselves from persecution, when we can do it honorably and with a good conscience. But, if we are called to declare our faith ; and cannot avoid it, without betraying truth and a good conscience ; we are, then, to own the Christian religion, even though we should lose our lives. And what can be more fit ; when we believe it upon evidence ; and see religion to have the greatest tendency to refine our reasonable nature, and make those, that are in our form, more exalted and happy, for-ever ?

Nothing

SERM. Nothing is braver than to dye; if we cannot, with a good conscience, escape death. Jesus Christ was himself an example of this true bravery. And the term, laid down in the Christian doctrine, is fit and reasonable, and deserves credit, just in proportion as the evidences are for the doctrine of Christianity. The way it proposes of attaining happiness, is equitable. And the truth of the doctrine clear and abundant; and such, as no unbiaſſed person, but must agree to it.

This, therefore, is a faithful saying.

The Messiah expressed, in proper terms, the words, which he received from his father. In proof of this, he worked many miracles: foretold very particular events; and (among other things) that he should dye, and rise again; that he would go to the father; and, then, bestow the gifts of the spirit. The apostles, in a few weeks after, preached this doctrine, in *Jerusalem*, where Christ had died and rose again. And there they testified that Christ was risen; and sealed this declaration of the fact, with their own blood. And, when the apostles preach-

preached Jesus, at the right-hand of God, SERM. he imparted degrees of the spirit. So that, IV. if we view it in this light, we shall see, that, as there is a reasonableness in the rewards, and in the terms of attaining them; so, likewise, the external evidence is so great, as may reasonably induce unbiaſſed persons to give credit to it, and to acknowledge that *this is a faithful saying.*

III. *Laſtly.* Let us conſider how the apoſtle ſtrengthens this. *If we believe not; yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himſelf.*

I ſhould rather tranſlate the firſt part thus, *If we are unfaithful; yet he abideth faithful.* And I think the Greek will bear this rendering. *If we are unfaithful: if we deny this religion; if we corrupt or mingle it with another doctrine; or intirely reject it: if we prove unfaithful any of theſe ways; yet he is faithful.* Now *faith* here regards the truth of a promiſe. And, to be ſure, we have expreſs declarations, in this religion, of a life of endleſs happineſs and glory; which will be given to thoſe that

SERM. that shall believe, and practise, what this

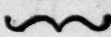
IV. religion does recommend.

There is an exprefs assurance, to those that are faithful unto death, of having a crown of life. And, on the other hand, that, if they throw off this doctrine, he will deny them; and will say, when he returns in the character of judge, *I know you not*. Thus the threatnings and promises are expreffly mentioned. Now (says the apostle) he, who has given us these promises, is a *GOD that cannot lye*. He will be faithful and true to his word. And to be otherwise would be to *deny himself*. So that it stands upon the faith of him, in whom, all the promises are *yea and amen*. This is the foundation; and certainly it is a very firm and solid foundation.

Give me leave to make some practical remarks.

I. Let me recommend to you a careful and frequent view of the rewards, which the Christian religion promises; and of the terms, that are necessary to attain them.

To

To gain a clear and distinct notion of SERM.
the Christian religion, and of the impor- IV.
tance of it, is certainly a matter of much 
greater moment than the bulk of man-
kind imagine. By frequent attention, to
fix in our minds, the view, which Christ
gives us of a better world; and the way
to arrive to it; is a matter of the last con-
sequence. For there is nothing greater
than our eternal happiness.

Let us take care to fix this in our minds,
as it lies in *revelation*. And then, we shall
have hopes of being exalted, where he is,
in the presence of the glory of our hea-
venly father; and in society with him,
who is the mediator; and in the company
of angels, and of the spirits of just men
made perfect. All our powers of thought
shall be exalted and refined. Every thing,
that is imperfect, and particularly every
thing immoral, shall be done away: and
pure, unmingled, unalloyed joys will there
be our portion. Our happiness shall have
no period put to it. Our knowledge will
be clear and extensive; and yet growing
for-ever. We shall always be making a
progress in our resemblance of the *Deity*;
of

SERM. of perfection, which is the source, the

IV. eternal source, of perfect and unalloyed

joys. And not the least apprehension that these will abate, much less have an end. We shall then be in the possession of this happiness, without any ground to fear that we shall be ever called to a state of temptation and trial any more. And is not this well worthy of God; and of our highest regard?

Let us consider what the terms are; and that just as they are discovered to us, in *revelation*. And, here, let us take care that we be not seduced by any. Nothing short of a sincere and steady obedience will bring us safe to endless glory. It is not being of a party. It is not having a true opinion; though we should not have the least mixture of error. These will not prevail to secure this happiness. Christ has plainly assured us, if the truth is not practised by us; and if we have not attempted our actions to what is reasonable, and what this doctrine has made necessary; we shall not be admitted to that endless felicity. Therefore *faith*, as the term of acceptance, in the sense of the sacred writers,
com-

comprehends all godliness. Without ho-
liness, no one shall see (or enjoy) the Lord. SERM. IV.

And Christ will be the author of eternal
salvation, only to such as obey him.
Therefore, do not flatter yourselves with
an expectation of rewards; unless your
temper be brought to a conformity to the
precepts of the Christian doctrine.

It is true, in all there are imperfections.
There are many weaknesses, which attend
the flesh. But it is necessary that all sin
should be so far subdued, as that it does
not reign in us. And it implies that we
are continually endeavoring after all the
virtues which the Christian doctrine re-
commends. We must be holy. We must
be attempered to peace, and love, and every
other virtue. Can any one imagine that
the last dying breath of a criminal can
make him meet for happiness?

There is one thing necessary; *that is*,
that we discover our repentance, by in-
deavoring to do all, we can, to undo
what we have done amiss. This is ab-
solutely necessary: or else we can have
no evidence of our repentance; no just
title to a crown of life. And, let me
caution

SERM. caution you, when you are settling what

IV. are the terms of salvation, laid down in

scripture, that you take all those scriptures together. A great many have, from some particular texts, infered several things, which they have substituted instead of an holy life. Now and then to shed a tear, or form a resolution; or to believe aright; or the like. Take care that you fix in your minds what are the scriptural terms. And you will find, that the faith, which purifieth the heart, and worketh by love to God and *others*, is what is necessary. You will easily have a clear apprehension of what the author of this religion has made necessary. And remember, *he is faithful, he cannot deny himself*. He will say to those, who have wrought miracles, if they have been workers of iniquity, *Depart from me, I know you not*.

The eternal happiness, which the gospel promises, is not to be obtained, but by sincere repentance and a steady regard to the example of its founder.

2. Often and seriously consider the evidence: and see whether this doctrine is not *a faithful saying*. Consider that this

is

is of the last importance ; and let nothing SERM.
divert you from it. IV.

3. Take care that you act consistently
to such convictions: remembering that
the more virtue, the more fitness for ano-
ther world ; and for higher degrees of
glory and felicity, and that for ever and
ever.



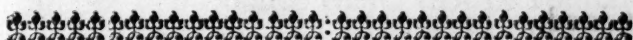
is of the highest importance, and the only way
to preserve the health of the nation is by
the most careful attention to the
diet and the exercise of the body.
The most important part of the diet is
the food which we eat, and the most
important part of the exercise is the
fresh air which we breathe.





S E R M O N V.

Upon repentance.



M A R K i. 14, 15.

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of GOD.

And saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of GOD is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."



W H E N our Savior celebrated S E R M. the passover, at Jerusalem; V. and wrought various miracles, many were induced to entertain and receive his doctrine.

SERM. *Nicodemus*, through fear of the *Sanhedrim* (though a ruler) came to our Lord, by night; and inquired of him the way, by which he should be admitted into his kingdom. Our Lord, in his conference with him, attempted to remove all the prejudices, which he had before entertained.

Then Jesus went from Jerusalem; and preached, in the land of Judea, the doctrine of the kingdom of God. But, when he found that the Pharisees, thro' envy, made a very warm and vigorous opposition against him; and that John was confined in prison, by Herod; he retired from the land of Judea into Galilee.

As Samaria lay between Judea and Galilee, Our Lord, in returning to Galilee, must go through Samaria. There he conversed with the woman of Samaria; and staid with the Samaritanes two days. After which, he prosecuted his design, of going into Galilee. And, in the order or harmony of the four gospels, the words, which we have read, relate what happened after John was put in prison. For then,

Upon repentance.

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then, *Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.* SERM.
V.

By the phrase [*the kingdom of God*] we are to understand that kingdom, which God designed to erect, by the Messiah. And, ver. 15. this writer does, in a more particular manner, represent, what was proper to introduce those, that he addresses to, into his kingdom; and the obligation of their receiving him, as *the sent of God.*

The time is fulfilled [that is, the fixed time, which the prophets had mentioned, was now accomplished:] *and the kingdom of God* [set up by the Messiah] *is at hand.* And then follows, *Repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

In order to represent these last words, in a clear light, it would be requisite to explain what is meant by *repentance*: and what by *believing the gospel.* And, then, to consider upon what grounds it is, that we are obliged to entertain the doctrine, which the Messiah has delivered to us. But it is only upon the first part of the last sentence, that we intend at present, to discourse; viz. *Repent ye.*

H 3

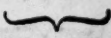
There

SERM. There are two words used to express
 V. this, in the writings of the New Testament. One denotes a *change of mind*; the other *an after care*. By both, I think, is clearly and fully described the duty of all persons, at least, to whom the gospel has been addressed. So it stands to denote a change of mind and conduct. It implies in it an alteration of sentiments, upon proper evidence: And a change of temper and action. But then, we must consider, that there is a thorough change required in some: and that, in others, the alteration is particular.

To open my mind, with the greatest clearness, upon this subject; it is evident that, when the Messias came and addressed to the Jews; and, afterwards to the Gentiles; *Repentance*, in reference to each of them, appears to have a different idea annexed to it.

When our Savior calls the Jews to *repentance*, or a change of mind and conduct; we cannot understand, that this extends to the varying of their opinion, or conduct, where there was no reason for such a change,

The

The Jews undoubtedly believed *in one* SERM.
God, the creator and governor of the V.
world: and they worshiped him alone. 
And, whilst they expressed a sincere and
steddy regard to the precepts, which he
had recommended to them, there could
be no place of change, or alteration.

The case of the Jews, at the time when
our Savior came, was undoubtedly some-
what different from that of the Gentiles.
They did profess to believe *in one* God ;
to worship the creator and governor of the
world; to own his providence; and to
express a regard to his law. And to be
sure, so far as they did this, consonant to
truth and the reason of things, they could
not be called upon to a change, or alte-
ration. However; it is plain that they had
lost just sentiments of true religion; and
had placed it in external rites, and out-
ward purifications; that they had neglected
(and our Savior reproved them for neglect-
ing) the weightier matters of the law,
mercy, and judgment, and fidelity; things,
which have an eternal obligation. They
placed religion in sacrifices, and outward
purifications, and external rites. And,

SERM. therefore, when John came, as the fore-

V.

runer of our savior, to prepare them for the reception of the kingdom of God, set up by the Messias, he calls them to *repentance*: that is, to change wrong sentiments, into such as were true; and, from an irregular practice, to turn to those things that have an intrinsic excellency and beauty in them. And when our Lord addressed to the Jews; and taught them, in Galilee, the doctrine of the kingdom; and excited them to *repentance*; we may easily apprehend that his doctrine was to take them off from false and mistaken opinions concerning real and true religion; and to ingage them in the pursuit of what had an intrinsic excellency in it. But, if we view the Gentiles, we must take this in a larger extent. They had bowed down to worship the workmanship of their own hands. They had forsaken the one true and living God. They had run into idolatry: and immersed themselves in vices, that are not proper to be named. When, therefore, *repentance* was recommended to them, we must suppose that it carried in it more, than when our Savior preached
repen-

repentance to the Jews. The Gentiles SERM.
were to change their sentiments, almost V.
intirely. And the whole course of their }
conduct was to be altered. They were
to forsake the false apprehensions, which
they had entertained of GOD. They were
to quit their idolatries; and to express their
belief in the one, first, all-perfect, moral
agent. And they were to make an intire
alteration in their conduct. For they had,
in general, given themselves up to the
practice of those vices, which accompa-
nied idolatry. When, therefore, the duty
of *repentance* was recommended to them,
we must suppose that it included an in-
tire alteration of temper and life.

This, I think, is the best way to form
a right notion of the duty of *repentance*.
When recommended to those, who make
a profession of the Christian religion; they
are not called to forsake the notions, which
they have received, upon evidence; and
which are true. They profess to believe
in one GOD; and that he has every per-
fection belonging to him. They own his
government and providence. They ex-
press their belief that Jesus is the Messiah;
and

SERM. and that his doctrine is from heaven. And
 V. they acknowlege that this revelation is the
 rule of their faith and practice. When,
 therefore, they are exhorted to *repentance* ;
 this must stand to regard only a mistaken
 sense, which they have formed of God
 and his government ; and every action,
 that has been disagreeable to the rule of
 reason and of the Christian revelation.

When those are exhorted to *repent*,
 who never turned their thoughts to any
 principle of religion, or expressed any re-
 gard to virtue, or future happiness ; the
 meaning must certainly be, that they are
 exhorted to attend to the principles of re-
 ligion ; and to the importance and neces-
 sity of piety and virtue : and that they
 should, in their future conduct, express
 a constant regard to what they apprehend
 to be the will of the creator and gover-
 nor of the world.

To address to all equally to repent,
 without settling just and clear ideas of this
 duty, is to discourse at random, and to
 recommend it, without any clear and dis-
 tinct explication.

Many

Upon repentance.

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Many there are, that have had a pious SERM.
education, and that have had a training up V.
in the ways of religion and virtue, attended
with the divine blessing. And they have
been guarded from a course of extravagant
conduct. When these are addressed *to re-*
pent; it is not to be imagined that they
are called upon, to quit every principle
that they have received; if founded upon
just reason: nor any conduct of their lives;
if agreeable to the rule of reason and re-
velation. But, in as much as every one
has many imperfections; and is, in some
instances, criminal: when they are exhorted
to repent, the meaning is, that they should
forsake every practice, which they are con-
scious of, that is contrary to the divine
law.

It is not necessary to every one that
there should be an intire change and alte-
ration. The meaning only is, that, where-
in they have thought amiss, and acted
contrary to the divine mind, they should
attain juster sentiments; and turn to
a more virtuous and pious life.

I have taken pains to set this in a light,
which appears to me to be agreeable to
truth,

SERM. truth, and to the revelation of our Lord
 V. and Savior. And I think it necessary : because many have represented the *new birth*, in such strong terms, as seems to be no way consistent to the doctrine of pure Christianity. Certainly, when we are conscious of mistakes ; and are sensible of any instance of action, that has deviated from the divine rule ; we ought to express a care to attain juster apprehensions ; and to arrive to a temper and conduct, that is more agreeable to the divine law.

Besides the word *μετάνοια*, there is another word used to express repentance ; viz. *μεταμέλεια*, which signifies *an after care*. I think no term could be more strong, or more forceable than this. It is not enough, surely, that we change false sentiments for true ; and a right conduct for what is vicious : but we must express care, in our future behavior, to continue in the practice of those duties, which *reason* and *revelation* injoin.

I am very sensible that, in treating on the doctrine of *repentance*, in a way of system, they have discoursed upon it in a manner different from what I have offered.

ferred. And, indeed, in many respects, SERM.
they have said things right and just. They V.
have, in *repentance*, supposed a sense of, }
and a sorrow for, sin; shame and confusion,
in reflecting upon their crimes; a resolution
to forsake and abandon vice; and that
formed with the greatest deliberation: and
finally, actual amendment and reformation.
Without all doubt, these things are
in part true. But not without care to be
received and entertained. Where any one
quits a course of vice, he certainly sees
that he has been wrong; that he has done
those things, which are debasing of his
reasonable nature; a stain to his intellectual
powers; contrary to his true happiness;
and incongruous unto the revelation of the
divine will. A penitent wishes, a thousand
times, that he had never done that which he
can never reflect on without blushing. He
desires that he may have just and right
sentiments, and act conformably to them for
the future. This enters into the character of
one that forsakes his course of vice. And it
is highly decent that such a sorrow for sin
should be attended and graced with tears; and
in

SERM. in proportion to his guilt. It is fit that
V. he should not only see the evil of vice,
on the account of the ill consequences,
which will attend the practice of it; but
on the account, that sin is a blemish to
his reasonable nature, and that it carries
in it the highest ingratitude to his creator
and benefactor. It is very proper that this
should enter into the exercise and practice
of true repentance. It is highly agreeable
that such, as are really penitent should
express that shame, as well as sorrow,
which must be the result of acting con-
trary to what is right and fit, and disa-
greeable to the very design of his nature.
And, in a most particular manner, to ag-
gravate all circumstances, which heighten
his crime, he should own that he has
committed it against so kind a father;
contrary to the light of his mind, and to
the many purposes which he had formed.
And it is highly proper that those, who
forsake a course of vice, should express
themselves in the most humble manner,
when they confess their sins, and the ag-
gravations of them, before their offended
governor. They should also, enter into
cool

Upon repentance.

III

cool and deliberate resolutions to forsake the practice of vice for the future. But, when all is done, these things are no farther valuable, than as they render the forsaking of sin effectual. It is to no purpose to express a sorrow for sin, if it is not forsaken. It is with a very ill grace, that any one sheds tears: and yet, when the next temptation comes, to fall in with it, and again to offend the great creator and governor of the world.

SERM.

V.

Those who complain that they cannot feel in themselves such sorrow, so pointed grief, as others do, when they exercise repentance, should consider, that these passions are no farther valuable, than as they have an influence upon the change of heart and life. The great thing in repentance is *amendment*. And any thing short of it will never give a just title to the character of a true penitent. We may express a deep sorrow for sin, and adorn it with a thousand tears, for having offended so kind a being as God is. But if we return to vice, all these most melting sorrows will avail us nothing. There is nothing more dangerous than the contrary
sen-

SERM.

V.

sentiment. Unhappy it is for any to think, that they may express sorrow, shed a few tears, and go on in the same practice as before. This has been a rock, whereon thousands have split. And, to carry on this, they have called in Christ, and his merits, and righteousness. But depend upon it, in such cases, they will have no effect. In short, *repentance is a change of heart and life*. No person is a true penitent, that does not quit his vice.

A divine temper and conduct are necessary to make us meet for glory. And he, that can shed tears; express sorrow, and resolution; and yet, by the next temptation, is carried away to the same course of vice; such a one can never be qualified and meet for heaven. He wants the temper and complection of mind necessary to a suitableness to the joys and the happiness of the future world. And I know nothing more dangerous than the contrary doctrine: *i. e.* to represent that persons may go on in a course of vice: and, if they now and then express resentment and grief, and appear determined to walk in a course of obedience, for the
futur

future ; though that purpose is not effectual ; they may have happiness : and especially, if, when they are called to die, they have a sense of their vices, and express grief and sorrow for what they have done amiss ; then they shall be waisted into the regions of eternal bliss.

SERM.

V.

There is no dependence upon a late repentance. You can never evince that it is sincere. I will not say that there is no instance. But that is to be known by the creator alone : and it must be the effect of his favor. This I am sure of : no Divine can minister comfort to such. And, if they, to whom they address, are persons of sense, they will find objections, that are not to be removed by the ablest Divine. When they have had the doctrine of *revelation* set before them, in the clearest manner ; and sufficient evidence to make it appear, that it is a doctrine from heaven ; how can they entertain a reasonable hope, after they have despised this doctrine ? How can they flatter themselves with the hopes of pardon ? How will they make it evident to their own minds, that they can relish the spiritual

SERM. joys of the other state? Depend upon it,
 V. there is no foundation for comfort, upon
 such a late repentance. And, therefore,
 the apprehension of a Christian is quite of
 a different kind. And we are to remember
 “ that heaven is a *state*; and that we
 “ must be attuned to it, by a divine
 “ life, here on earth.

Thus I have opened to you the doctrine
 of *repentance*: and have set it before you,
 just as it lies in *revelation*: and, as we
 have reason to apprehend, our Savior and
 his apostles understood it; when they ad-
 dressed to different persons, to Jews or
 Gentiles: whether they applied to those
 that needed an entire change, or to such
 as, upon the account of some wicked ac-
 tions, had reason for the exercising of a
 particular repentance. And I have given
 you a view of *repentance*; as it is gene-
 rally delivered. And have shown you that
 true repentance consists in an *alteration*
of temper and life. It is true, the wisest
 and best, the most sincere and upright
 penitent, has many imperfections. There
 are remaining appetites and passions;
 which, in every instance cannot be so per-
 fectly

fectly regulated, as a good man wishes and endeavors. But these are imperfections, that attend our state; and will not indanger our future happiness. SERM.
V.

Under the Christian religion, we are called to sincerity. Perfection is not that, on which our future happiness depends. Indeed, every Christian aims at, and presses on towards, perfection. But he does not suffer his mind to be dejected, and to have all his hopes sunk; because there are, in him, some imperfections. He knows that these are the attendents of the present state. But he does not allow himself in any known vice. And he sees so much of the beauty of virtue, and excellency of holiness, that he presses after higher attainments of it. This is the character of a true christian and a sincerely virtuous person.

I will conclude this discourse, with making some practical remarks upon what has been offered.

I. We may see what is the religion of God.

SERM. The Kingdom of God consists in
 V. righteousness and extensive virtue. And
 the real design of its being imparted to
 us, was to bring us to piety and virtue.
 And, in as much as we cannot in this
 state attain a faultless obedience, God, in
 infinite mercy and goodness, has conde-
 scended to inform us, by *revelation*, that,
 if we are sincere, and believe the prin-
 ciples of religion, so as to be influenced
 by them, in our temper and life; and,
 in consequence, are upright in the prac-
 tice of our duty; we shall have his fa-
 vor, and a reward given us in the future
 world.

The design of religion is virtue. And
 what ever doctrines are offered to us, that
 relax these obligations, we may justly re-
 ject them, even without any farther ex-
 amination. And whatever religion is of-
 fered to us, that inforces real piety and
 virtue, we should express a care in ex-
 amining it. But it is very wrong to sup-
 pose that *religion* consists in any thing
 that is external. All, that is ritual, will
 have no avail, either to make us perfect
 or happy. It is the love of God and
others,

others, or sincere piety and extensive virtue, which is the ultimate design of every revelation of the divine will. And *religion* does not consist in show and appearance, or in mere profession. It consists in a divine temper of mind, and in a firm resolution to act what is agreeable to the divine perfections, which are imitable by us. No outward appearance, or external profession; nor all the solemnities, that attend it; can have any effect upon our true happiness. It is sincere virtue, real inward holiness, which God recommends to us. The religion of the kingdom of God consists not in outward show and appearance; but in righteousness, and peace, and the joy resulting from thence.

2. I intreat you seriously to reflect upon yourselves, and do not defer repentance.

Without delay return to God. You know not how soon you may be cut off. You are sensible that, without holiness, no one will ever enjoy the Lord; and that, to expect happiness in another state, unless we are attuned to it, by the practice of piety and virtue, is perfectly groundless.

SERM. What will you have recourse to, to induce you to delay repentance? will you

V.



say that *it is time enough*? How do you know that? The longer you delay it, the stronger will be the habits of vice. And you are not sure that you shall gain the mastery of them. Would any person of reflection go on in a course, that has a tendency to his eternal death and destruction: and, at the same time, acknowledge that he must turn from it, or be for-ever unhappy? What must be done should never be delayed; if it can now be done. And do not flatter yourselves, that you may escape the divine resentment, if you go on in a course of offending him. Without doubt, he is kind, and desires your happiness. And one would think such goodness would animate you to return unto him with your whole hearts. But, if you go on to affront him, he will certainly express his displeasure. And are you an equal match for him, whose power is uncontrollable? Or do you flatter yourselves with hopes of escaping his notice. Whither can you fly? If you think to shelter yourselves under the covert of night,

night, the darkness is light unto him. If you go to the utmost parts of the earth, he is there. And his presence fills all places, and all space. And, if you cannot escape him, nor are equal to him, why should you not without delay return to him? What does he call you to quit? only what is debasing your nature. And he calls you to the practice of what is the perfection of it. One would imagine that this should be an effectual argument, to prevail with you to forsake it.

“ But it is time enough. I am young.
“ It is time enough to be grave, when
“ age makes me so. Why should I
“ mar the pleasure of my younger days?”

And, pray ; does religion prevent your happiness? Is not whatever God has recommended to your practice, calculated to give you the highest pleasure? The pleasures of sin are tormenting. They will never bear the review. They always leave a sting behind them. But the pleasures, arising from virtue, are serene ; calmly reflected on, with pleasure. And there is an unspeakable pleasure, in the expectation of complete happiness, in another world.

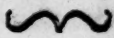
SERM.

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“ But some will be ready to say, “ I shall
 “ at last return. And it is time enough.
 “ I need not be so solicitous. When I am
 “ upon a death-bed, I can offer up my
 “ prayers, and secure my pardon.”

Can you so? Are you sure that the consequence of a long course of vice will not be fatal, and render your heart indisposed to any motion of repentance? But, if you have some thoughts of it, are you sure that your repentance is sincere? Many have appeared to have the character of penitents. But yet, when they have recovered, they have been drawn into the same course of vice again. Pray; where is the certainty, that your repentance is more sincere? And what do you lose, if you should quit a course of vice? Why; you will only lose a few moments of the pleasures of sense; which are attended with the greatest uneasiness, in the girds of conscience, that spring from the review. This is all you will lose: *viz.* the practice of what cannot be reflected on, without the utmost shame and confusion of face. On the other hand, by the exercise of repentance, you gain inexpressibly

bly

bly more than the pleasures of sin ; if they SERM.
can with propriety be called *pleasures*. By V.
repentance, you gain serenity of mind, 
calmness of conscience, a capacity of con-
versing with yourselves. And you gain
a view of another and better life.

But, if you go on in a course of vice,
the wages of sin are death and destruction
from the presence of the Lord ; when
this frame and structure of the world
shall be all in a blaze : when the ungodly
shall be destroyed ; and the righteous recei-
ved where our Lord is. Will you, therefore,
incur death and destruction from the pre-
sence of the Lord ? And lose that happi-
ness, which you may attain to ? It is set
before you : and the way to it is mark-
ed out : *viz.* the practice of what is rea-
sonable and fit ; what makes you perfect
and happy in this state. And, surely, no
persons would engage in a course of vice,
if they would attend, and consider, and
frequently revolve the case in their own
mind, that the ways of sin are the ways
of misery and death ; and the path of
righteousness is peace ; and the fruit of ho-
liness,

SERM. liness, joy ; and the end thereof, everlasting life.



3, lastly. We may see how reasonable a doctrine that of Christ is ; and what sentiments we may form of the preaching his gospel.

Nothing is more reasonable than that, when we have erred from the truth, we should endeavor to gain right sentiments, Nothing is more equitable than that, when we have acted contrary to reason, we should abandon that course of action ; and practise that which is right and fit.

Nothing is more reasonable than the doctrine of repentance. And we may easily see what it is *to preach the gospel*. Some weak persons have represented that they are no gospel preachers, who preach repentance. And they think nothing is gospel-preaching, but what they call *preaching Christ*. " Pray ; what did Christ himself preach ? " Certainly, they can never think so contrary to the Christian revelation, as to say that Christ himself did not preach the gospel. And yet he went about preaching repentance ; that is the necessity of turning from sin to holiness. When, there-

therefore, any one preaches repentance; SERM.
he preaches what Christ himself preached. V.

And, when he is recommending any duty, he is preaching the very doctrine that Christ taught. When he is recommending such a faith in Christ; and in the kingdom, that he has set up; as that men should be influenced thereby, in their disposition and life; when he is describing that the ultimate end of all revelation is to make us holy; he is really preaching agreeably to the very view of all revelation. Such objections, therefore, against the preachers of repentance are perfectly groundless. *We preach Christ*, when we represent the necessity of a change of a sinner's heart and life. We are, then, recommending that which is included in the doctrine taught by our Savior himself.

To conclude. Let us seriously review our temper and life. And wherein we fail of that duty, which reason and revelation injoin, let us immediately manifest a concern to get the ascendent, and to suppress whatever is contrary to the divine will,

Let

SERM. Let it be the care of our lives to attain

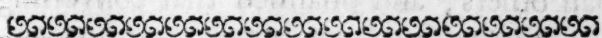
V. higher degrees of real piety and virtue ;
knowing that our perfection and happiness
consist in them.

Let us not flatter ourselves with vain hopes, that we shall attain eternal life ; whether we are fit for it or no, in our disposition and conduct. Let us act as those who are satisfied that, without holiness, no one shall see (or enjoy) the Lord. And let us not deceive ourselves, under general terms : but let us carefully state what is implied in *holiness* ; and trace it in all the various branches of it ; by expressing a constant care to attain to the practice of every virtue which enters into the Christian life. And, if we continue in this pursuit, we shall have the pleasing hope, that, when our Savior returns, we shall receive from his kind and gracious hand a crown of glory and everlasting felicity. Amen.



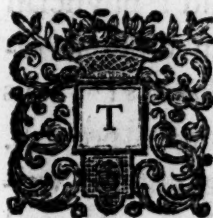
S E R M O N VI.

On moral and positive duties.



MATT. ix. 13.

*But go ye and learn what that
meaneth, "I will have mercy
and not sacrifice."*



THE occasion of these words SERM.
VI.
was this. Our Savior pass-
ing by *Matthew*, sitting at
the receipt of custom, com-
manded him *to follow him*.
Upon which, he arose and attended our
Lord. And, when he came to his house,
he gave an invitation to our Lord, and
made an entertainment for him. And,
when several, whose characters in common
estimate

SERM. estimate were not in high repute (as publican-
 VI. licanes and finers) the Pharisees took occasion to express their dislike. And they said to his disciples, "Why eateth your master with persons of such an infamous character?" The Pharisees made a pretence of being more devout and religious than others, and phansied that conversing with publicanes and finers, or suffering them to touch them, would occasion defilement. This was the ground, upon which they took offence at our Savior's being at the entertainment, where there were publicanes and finers.

In vindicating his conduct, Jesus represents that his character was like that of a physician. And where should a physician be, but with his patients; in order to recover them from their disorders? This seems to have been a common proverb. And we find it used among antient writers. One of whom, when he was blamed for his manner of conduct, makes use of the very same phrase.

Our Lord adds, *Go ye and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice.*

crifice. For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

SERM.

VI.

I. I shall endeavor to explain these words.

II. Offer reasons why *mercy* is preferable to *sacrifice*.

III. Shew how strong and pertinent an answer this was, to the Pharisees. And then,

IV. Make practical remarks.

I. It will be proper to set the sense of these words before you, in a clear and distinct light.

When our Savior says, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*: we are not to take the meaning in an absolute, but in a comparative sense.

Sacrifices were appointed of God himself. And, therefore, the intent of the prophet, from whom these words are quoted, is not to abate the obligation of complying with the law of God, relating to sacrifices. But the true meaning is, *I will rather have mercy than sacrifice*. That this is the sense, is evident, if we consider

SERM. sider *Hosea* vi. 6. *For I desired mercy and*

VI. *not sacrifice, [It follows] and the knowledge*

of God more than burnt-offerings. The latter clause explains the former. "I will rather have mercy than an exact performance of the sacrifices, which I have instituted."

And this manner of expression is very frequent in the sacred writings; *Rend your hearts, and not your garments.* Every one knows that it was the custom, under the law, in their public fasts, to express repentance, by rending their cloaths, and by scattering ashes upon their heads. The sense is not, therefore, that they should not rend their garments; but that humbling their minds, before God, was to be preferred to all the external ways, by which they were used to express their resentment of sorrow, for their having offended.

By *mercy*, we are to understand goodness to those that are miserable. And *mercy* is a duty, that is in its own nature excellent. Beneficence (or goodness) is one of the highest and completest duties, that are recommended to us, by *reason* or *revelation*.

By

By *sacrifice*, here, we are to understand SERM. every thing that is *positive*. Only this is VI. fixed on, as that which was a most eminent part of the positive duties, enjoined under the law.

We may, then, from what has been offered, come to know the true sense of these words. “ I will rather have the practice of duties, that are of immutable and eternal obligation; or which have an intrinsic excellency in them; than of duties, that have no other obligation, but from an express command; or which are of a positive nature.” And it appears very evident that the design of the words, is, to shew us the preference of duties good in themselves, to those that are positive, and that have no other foundation, for the observance of them, but the express command of GOD. — This I take to be the sense of the words.

II. I shall offer reasons why mercy is preferable to sacrifice. Or why there should be such preference given to *moral* duties above *positive*.

SERM. I. Duties, which are in their own nature good, and which are founded upon
 VI. eternal and immutable reason, are the very rule, by which God, the universal governor, himself acts.

It is certain that God ever will invariably act agreeably to truth, and justice, and wise goodness.

We cannot suppose that, where there is infinite knowlege, to discern what is fit; where there is unerring wisdom, to determine agreeably to what is fit; and uncontrollable power, to act what is fit; and no temptation to run counter to what is wise and right, but that there will arise an invariable acting, suitable to what is fit and right. And this is what we call by the term of *holiness*; when we say *that God is holy*.

Whatever, therefore, is of everlasting obligation; and what is the rule of the divine actions; must certainly, in a wise judgment, have the highest preference.

2. That, which is in itself good, is the perfection of a reasonable nature, and attended with true happiness.

What is *positive*, when complied with, from a regard to the command of God, must

must undoubtedly be pleasing to him. SERM.
But, abstractly considered, we cannot say, VI.
positive duties are connected with the per-
fection and happiness of the reasonable
nature. I say, *abstractly considered*. And
yet, GOD has given no positive command,
but what has a tendency, some way or
other, to effect our happiness. But then
it is not what arises immediately from the
nature of the precepts themselves. Where-
as the love of GOD and *others*, which are
duties good in themselves, stand in insepa-
rable and immediate connection with our
real perfection and true happiness.

3. Positive duties are only *means*. Du-
ties, that are good in themselves, are *the*
end; and introduce a temper, that is per-
fective of our make, and productive of our
real happiness.

When GOD, by *revelation*, enjoins po-
sitive duties, we are to consider that, as
he is a Being directed by unerring wisdom,
there are always reasons for such duties.
And I think, there is no necessity of adding
[*whether those reasons be known to us or no.*]
For I cannot find, in all *revelation*, any
duties, that are positive, of which we

SERM. have not some intimation given, of the
 VI. reason, on the account of which they were
 commanded. But positive duties are designed as *means* to prevent vice ; and guard, and secure, and increase our virtue ; *that is*, a temper in its own nature excellent.

When GOD gave to the people of *Israel*, numerous duties, which were positive, and had no intrinsic excellency in them ; the plain reason why they were enjoined, was, that by them they might be kept from what is immoral ; and be guarded from vices, which are stains and blemishes to the reasonable and intelligent nature. And, if we come to the positive duties of Christianity, we shall find that they are designed as *means*. Why have we *baptism* appointed ; but to represent to those, that, by this institution, are introduced into the kingdom of the Messiah, that they must put off every thing that is vitious ; *be dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness* ? Why are we called to commemorate the death of Christ ; but, by the remembrance of his death, to call to mind his love to us ; in that he voluntarily appeared in our form, and in our world ; and passed through scenes of sorrow,

row, and died; to bring about our happiness and salvation. And, by recollecting this, we are strongly influenced to comply with his doctrine and example; and to resemble him, in that goodness, which he expressed to us, in dying for us? So that nothing is more clear and plain than that positive duties are only *means*; and must ever be considered in this light. And, if so; it is no surprize that there should be a preference given to what is moral and of eternal obligation. For these being *means* to that which is the *end*; and as the end is, in all cases, to be preferred to the means; it will follow, that the end, for the accomplishment of which the means are valuable, must have the preference.

Thus I have shown upon what grounds it is that moral duties are preferable to positive. What is *moral*, is the rule of the Divine actions. He never will act against what is right and fit. *Moral* duties render us more perfect, and happy, in the performance: but *positive* institutions, considered abstractly from the end they are designed to produce, do not make us more perfect or happy.

SERM. That, which is of eternal obligation, is

VI. *final-religion*; the other is only as *means*.

And, as the end is of greater value than the means, it is reasonable that preference should be given to what is of a moral nature, rather than to what is positive.

III. It was proposed to show how strong and pertinent an answer this was to the Pharisees. Or, in other words, how it stands, in the case, which occasioned the introducing this passage from the prophet *Hosea*.

We find that the Pharisees were greatly offended at our Savior's freely conversing with publicanes and sinners. They imagined that there was danger of being defiled even by touching them. Our Lord receives the invitation of *Matthew*. And, at the entertainment, conversed with publicanes and sinners. The Pharisees were extremely offended, on this account. Our Lord tells them that he was a physician; and that it was highly proper to converse with those that had need to be cured by him. *The whole need not a physician; but they that are sick*. And, if you are chagrined that I converse

verse with those, who are publicanes, or whom you look upon as sinners; remember that it was my design, in coming into the world, to recover sinners from vice, and restore them to piety and virtue. And, in order to this, it is proper to converse with them. To which he adds, “ Go ye,
“ and learn what that meaneth, *I will*
“ *have mercy and not sacrifice.* And then
“ you will see a sufficient vindication of
“ this part of my behavior. If you have
“ any ground to avoid conversation with
“ men of this character, it must be only
“ as *means*; that you may not, by such
“ a free converse, countenance them in
“ sin; and make them apprehend, that
“ they may be happy, in a course of vice.
“ But will this be a just reason to restrain
“ me from conversing with them; when
“ my design is to take them off from
“ sin; and to influence them to real piety
“ and virtue? I converse with them, as
“ a physician, that was sent from the
“ father, to cure and restore those that
“ are under disorder, occasioned by a
“ course of vice. It is my office; and I
“ converse with this design; that I may

SERM. " bring them back, from vice, to the
 VI. " practice of sincere piety and real holi-
 ~~~~~ " nefs. If you imagine that it is wrong  
 " that I should converse with them; you  
 " have no reason for the support of this.  
 " Your sentiment is so far just, that it is  
 " prudent not to choose the society of  
 " those that are vitious; when there is  
 " danger of your being taken off from  
 " the ways of piety and virtue; and to  
 " ingage in the same pursuits, in which  
 " they are unhappily ingaged. But my  
 " design is to bring them to the love of  
 " real virtue. Go, therefore, and learn  
 " what the prophet says, *I will have mer-*  
 " *cy and not sacrifice; i. e.* goodness rather  
 " than any thing that is of a positive na-  
 " ture. I converse with them, to express  
 " the highest goodness, and greatest in-  
 " stance of mercy. I am sensible of the  
 " dangerous state they are in; and know  
 " the misery, that will attend their con-  
 " tinuing in it: unless they are brought  
 " to repentance. It is with this view that  
 " I converse with them. And thereby  
 " I evidence the greatest mercy and good-  
 " nefs. Your own prophet told you that  
 " God

“ GOD would have what is good, kind, SERM.  
“ or beneficent, rather than even all the VI.  
“ instances of what is positive. And  
“ what the prophet said I approve and  
“ confirm. And, thereby my conduct is  
“ fully vindicated.”

Thus you see how it stands as it is  
our Savior's answer to the objection of the  
Pharisees,

IV. I procede to make some practical  
remarks.

I. Give me leave to caution you against  
having a low opinion of any thing, which  
has the stamp and authority of GOD up-  
on it; merely because it is the *means*, and  
not the *end*.

There are many, in this age, who throw  
a slight and contempt upon what GOD  
has enjoined; merely because it is *positive*.  
Some go so far as to assert that there can  
be no *positive command*, which can be  
proved to be of divine original. It is,  
indeed, an assertion, that is pretty bold,  
and not well grounded. Without doubt,  
what is *final*, in religion, is a divine tem-  
per and a good life; or, in other words,  
real

SERM. real piety and extensive virtue. But, why

VI. the Being, that is parent of all, and whose wisdom is consummate, may not injoin some, that, in supposed circumstances, may be proper means, in order to effect this end, I cannot see.

The Jews were addicted to idolatry. The worshipping of *strange Gods* was attended with infamous vices. To take off that nation from idolatry, several duties, or obligations, were laid upon them, that were *positive*, in order to imploy them; and to lead them to the knowlege of the one supreme governor of the world: and, thereby, secure them from runing into the customs of all the nations around them. History assures us, that they were very much addicted to the worshipping *other Gods*. And it is no great surprize to any, who will consider, that, when all around them paid their adoration to the workmanship of their own hands; and it is not easy for a nation, any more than one person to be singular; and, when, in the practice of the antient idolatry, there was a great deal of pomp and pageantry; it does not (I say) greatly surprize considerate persons,

sons, that the Jews should be disposed to fall in with the practice of their neighboring nations. And no one but must see it worthy of God, to injoin some positive duties, as instrumental to prevent their idolatry, and the vices that attended it. SERM.  
VI.

If we have a clear evidence of the *Divine* authority, for the practice of what is *positive*, we have the highest reason to express a regard to it. To say, "We cannot see any reason for what is *positive*;" is intirely groundless. For, upon reflection, we may discern that a positive duty is a mean, to carry on and promote real piety and holiness.

2. Let us take care to form a right judgment of the rank and order, in which the commands are to be placed.

It is certain, that every thing, which is commanded of God, should be complied with. It becomes us, as his intelligent creatures. And, when we see evidently that it is enjoined by the governor of the world, it is highly fit and decent, that we should, with care, act conformably to it. But still, we ought to make a difference, because there is so, in the nature of things,  
between



SERM. between what is of eternal obligation and

VI. what is positive. And, therefore, we  
 should form a right judgment of the several duties, which are enjoined us, by our creator and governor. We should neglect none that are clearly of divine original : but we should give the preference to those of a moral nature. This is absolutely necessary ; and would be attended with great advantages ; if it was done with a close attention of mind, and frequent meditation. For, when we thereby clearly see that even God himself, in his *revelation*, has preferred what is of eternal obligation, to that which is positive, we shall not place our hopes upon an exact observance of what is ritual and positive ; which has been the cause of a fatal mistake ; and into which (I fear) many have run.

It is difficult to have, always, a wise government of our passions ; to express a constant regard to truth ; ever to have that temper of mind towards God, which appears fit, and which arises from the consideration of his perfections, and of the relation, which we stand in to him. I say, this steady practice of duties, in their

own

own nature reasonable and excellent, will be attended with difficulty. And many will, rather than not indulge themselves in some favorite irregular passion, find out some substitute; and commute with the divine Being. The Jews went into an exact tithing of mint, annise, and cumin; and the like. And, if by this they could calm their minds, they would form an hope of being happy in another state. The more we attend to this, therefore, that those duties, which are in their own nature excellent, are preferable to those which are positive; the more we shall be convinced of the groundless hopes, that any one forms of happiness; if, at the same time, he wants real piety and true virtue. And this is of very great importance to us. Without cultivating, in our minds, a proper regard to those duties, which God has recommended, we shall be in great danger of setting an higher value upon what is external and instrumental than what is moral; and of placing our hopes and dependences upon what is external, and what will not at all avail to our future hap-

SERM. happiness; unless we have real piety and  
 VI. sincere holiness.

Many take sanctuary in something that is quite foreign to real piety and inward holiness. External practices of devotion; attendance upon the ministry of the word; commemorating the death of Christ; are, unquestionably, all duties. But, if these are depended upon, without real holiness, we shall find, by observation, that we have not that complection of mind, which is necessary to qualify us for real and true happiness. And, as the affair of another world is of the last importance, whatever is proper to secure us from mistakes of such infinite moment to us, must be of the greatest advantage.

3. Let us, in consequence, of having a right judgment, have also a right practice.

When our judgments are informed, let our conduct be agreeable. When we know what is of the last importance, in a life of religion, let us press after the attainment of it. Let us have a love of God, and others. Let us be true in our words; faithful in our promises; and just in all our conduct. Let us cultivate a merciful disposition, which is preferable

able to every thing of a positive nature. Let us SERM.  
not indulge ourselves in any irregular passion; VI.

and think to commute with God. The prophet has set the folly of this in the strongest light, that I have ever met with, in any writer whatever. “ Wherewith shall I come be-

“ fore the Lord? Shall I offer a thousand

“ rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall

“ I devote to him my very off-spring, to

“ atone for the guilt, which I have con-

“ tracted?” God, by that prophet, repre-

sents to us, what may set us right, and may

convince us what is of the last importance

for us to practise. “ What does God re-

“ quire of you? Sacrifices? No: the most

“ expensive and most pompous offerings

“ will be of no service. *Do justice, love*

“ *mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.*”

These are, in every part of revelation, represented as of the last consequence.

We see, then, what is our great and important business in this life; it is to attain settled habits of piety and virtue. It is to shun those things; which the world, by glittering appearances, are very prone to: and to forsake every thing, so far as it does tempt us from the practice of what

is



SERM. is right and fit. We are to cultivate our  
VI. minds, with this view; to know, in the  
distinctest manner, our duties to God, and  
*others*, and *ourselves*. And, when we  
have attained that knowledge, we are to  
practise those duties, which are good in  
themselves, and essential to our happiness.  
Let us take care not to be led away by  
phantasy. But, when we have settled these  
things in our minds, let us act steddily and  
constantly in conformity to them; with-  
out suffering the rapid stream of custom  
to hurry us away; or the glittering shows  
of external objects to allure us. This is  
the character of the man that is pious and  
virtuous. Without this, all our pretences  
to religion are vain.

4. Let us take care, when we commemorate the death of CHRIST, not to apprehend, that, in consequence of this, our state will be set right, in the very taking the bread and wine, and in reviving the memory of our Lord.

It is fit to do this. But this is only a mean; that, by remembering his love, we may be influenced to beneficence and goodness;

ness; and may imitate him, who has expressed his love to us by dying for us. SERM. VI.

This should engage us to resemble the goodness of our heavenly father; who has so loved us, as to send his only-begotten son to die for us: that, through his death, resurrection, ascension, and mediation, we might attain the inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for us.

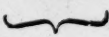
5, *Lastly*. Let us carefully fix the ground of our hope of happiness, in a future world.

As this is of the greatest consequence, take care that you are not partial in the scrutiny. You see the duties, which are good in themselves, are preferable to those that are positive. Do not, therefore, place your hopes in what is only instrumental in religion.

Some, perhaps, will tell you, that it is an undeniable evidence of your title to the heavenly inheritance, that you attend the ministry of the gospel; that you are members of this or that society; or that you commemorate the death of Christ. These are all fit to be done. But mercy, truth, righteousness, a love of God, beneficence

SERM. to men, and a divine temper, must be of  
 VI. infinitely greater importance, to give us a  
 well-grounded hope of the happiness,  
 which the gospel promises, in a future  
 world. And, indeed, this will be clear  
 and beyond all doubt, if we consider, that  
*Heaven is a state*, which we are to be made  
 fit for, by the practice of piety and virtue;  
 or we can never be capable of receiving,  
 it. Nay, if the wicked were admitted  
 into heaven, there would be an utter in-  
 capacity of relishing those joys, that spring  
 from settled habits of piety and virtue.

Let us take care to conduct ourselves,  
 in such a manner, that we do not contemn  
 the practising of any thing that has the  
 stamp of Divine authority upon it. Nor  
 yet, put positive duties, in the place of  
 those that are, in their own nature, excel-  
 lent. Let us consider what reason has di-  
 rected us to. And let us express propor-  
 tionable zeal and ardor for obtaining that  
 temper and conduct, which result from  
 practising those duties, that are in their  
 own nature excellent. The more we ad-  
 vance in this, the more we increase in the  
 temper of heaven; the more we anticipate  
 those

those joys of the future world. The man, SERM.  
whose mind is brought to a steady love of VI.  
that which is in its own nature excellent,   
and regulates his conduct by it, has entered  
into the heavenly state; and leads a life,  
which will qualify him, and make him  
fit, for the joys of the future, everlasting  
world.





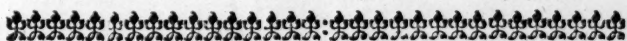
those of the future. The whole mind is brought to a focus, and that which is in its own nature, and regulates its conduct, is brought into the present state, and made to which will possibly lead, and make it fit for the joys of the next world.





## S E R M O N VII.

The qualifications of prayer.



MATT. vii. 7, --- 11.

*Ask, and it shall be given you :  
seek, and ye shall find : knock,  
and it shall be opened unto you.  
For every one, that asketh, receiveth :  
and he, that seeketh findeth :  
and to him, that knocketh, it  
shall be opened.*

*Or what man is there of you ;  
whom, if his son ask bread, will  
he give him a stone ?*

*Or, if he ask a fish, will he give  
him a serpent ?*

L 3

If

*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?*

SERM.  
VII.



THE connection of these words with the former part of this excellent sermon, is given in a different way, by interpreters. Some apprehend, that, when our Lord had, in the preceding verses, recommended to them to take care that no sin might reign in them; that thereby they might be the better qualified to reprove others; and gave them a caution, that they should not give that which is holy unto dogs; since the practice of those duties required prudence, and was attended with some difficulties; — then our Lord directs them to address unto GOD, that they might receive that wisdom which came from above, and by which they might be directed in their conversation.

Others

Others suppose that, when our Lord SERM.  
came near to the end of this sermon, he VII.  
intended to recommend to them *prayer*, as  
a proper mean, by which they might be  
engaged and assisted in the practice of the  
several duties, which he had, in this dis-  
course, recommended to them.

Which ever of these we take, our Savior  
here recommends our offering unto God  
our prayers, in order to obtain those bles-  
sings, which are necessary for us in this  
state, and requisite to prepare us for hap-  
piness in the future state.

In the words, which we have read, we  
have three things remarkable.

I. A duty recommended by our Lord,  
and expressed in various ways, *ask, seek,*  
and *knock*.

II. Here is a promise made, as an in-  
couragement to influence us to the practice  
of this duty. *Ask, and it shall be given*  
*you; Seek, and ye shall find: Knock, and*  
*it shall be opened unto you.*

III. You have this promise illustrated  
in an elegant allusion to the goodness,  
which an earthly parent is disposed to ex-



SERM. preſs to his off-ſpring. And the argument  
VII. is from the leſs to the greater.

Every one is apprized that there is a tender affection, in parents, to their deſcendents. *What man is there of you; of whom, if a ſon aſk bread, will he give him a ſtone? Or, if he aſk a fiſh, will he give him a ſerpent? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more will your heavenly father give good things to them that aſk him?*

We ſhall endeavor, under theſe three heads, to explain the words, which we have read, and then conclude, by making practical remarks.

I. Our Lord recommends to his followers, to addreſs their prayers unto God: particularly, that they ſhould apply to him for thoſe favors, which they deſire; and which are neceſſary and proper to their happineſs.

In every revelation, *prayer* has been recommended; and it has been the practice of perſons of every nation, and of every religion.

There are, indeed, ſome in this age, that, from miſtaken notions, have queſtioned

tioned " Whether it is a duty to pray to God." SERM.  
VII.

Indeed, we are not to imagine that our prayers can inform the divine Being, or excite his goodness, to impart to us any thing improper. But, as we are creatures and dependent upon him, we should acknowledge this, by our constant addresses unto him; and it appears to be part of the scheme of the divine conduct that we should pray, in order to obtain proper blessings. *For these things (says God) I will be inquired of.* And it is evident, that they, who exercise themselves in the duty of prayer, experience the happy influence, which it has, to form a right temper and disposition of mind; and to prepare them for the practice of those duties, that arise from the different dispensations of the providence of God towards them.

Some interpreters suppose that there is no difference between *asking*, *seeking*, and *knocking*; but that these are different terms, to express the same thing. I am inclineable to apprehend, that there is a little difference. *Asking* expresses, in general, the addressing our prayers unto God. *Seeking* carries

SERM. carries in it diligence. And *knocking* de-

VII. notes perseverance, attended with fervor. So that, our Lord here recommends to his followers not only to address their prayers to his father; but to do it with diligence; with proper fervor of mind; with steadiness; and that they should constantly persevere in this duty, though they should not have those particular blessings conferred upon them, immediately, for which they addressed to God.

II. Here is a promise made, to encourage us to the practice of this duty of PRAYER. *Ask, and it shall be given: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

But, inasmuch as we cannot expect that our *prayers* should be heard; or that our addresses to heaven should be attended with our receiving the blessings, which we apply for; — unless we have those qualifications, which are, in *revelation*, made necessary; or, unless we pray in a right manner; I shall endeavor to lay before you, in one view, all the limitations, that revealed religion lays down. Which, if we want; we have no reason to suppose that our addresses

dress to heaven will be attended with success. SERM. VII.

The restrictions, which *revelation* has offered to us, either refer to the character of the persons, who address to God; or to the matter of their prayers; or to the manner, in which they perform their devotion.

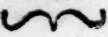
1. With regard to the character of those that ask.

(1.) The Scripture plainly represents, that they, who form a just expectation of having their prayers heard, must be taken off from a love of every vice.

This is expressly mentioned, Psalm lxi. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* If, therefore, we should address to God; and apprehend that it is of no advantage, because we do not find our prayers are heard; — we should inquire, “ Whether we have the  
“ proper and requisite character of those,  
“ whose addresses will be acceptable to  
“ God?” And, indeed, if we consider *Deity*, we shall find that he is a Being of all perfection; wise, powerful, true and righteous, faithful and beneficent. And, if we consider that our addresses and prayers  
are



SERM. are made to him, to assist us against every

VII.  temptation, and to conquer every vice; how can any, who are still determined to go on in a course of vice, ever flatter themselves with a delusive hope of finding acceptance with God? or of having their prayers answered? How hypocritical is it, to address to God, as an holy Being, and implore his aid against what is irregular and criminal; and yet, at the same time, to be conscious to ourselves that we are not determined to quit those strong dispositions to vice, in which we have indulged ourselves?

(2.) In order to form a well-grounded hope that our prayers shall be accepted and answered, we must be sincerely disposed to practise all that the creator and governor of the world commands.

This, I think, appears very plain from John ix. 31. *Now we know (i. e. we are firmly assured) that God heareth not sinners: but, if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.* Therefore no man, that is resolved to allow himself in any known course of vice, can ever flatter himself with an hope of having his  
addresses

addresses to heaven accepted. For who-  
 ever is not a doer of the will of GOD, as  
 well as a worshiper of him, cannot form  
 a firm and just expectation of having his  
 prayers answered. This is very strongly  
 expressed, Psalm cxlv. 19. *He will fulfil  
 the desire of them that fear him. He also  
 will bear their cry, and will save them.*

When Christ promises that, if we ask  
 the father, he will give us what we ask;  
 it is certainly vain to imagine that this  
 must take in all that address to the father,  
 without any limitation. No! For it is  
 plain, that they, who run counter to the  
 commands of GOD, have no reason to ap-  
 prehend, that ever their prayers will reach  
 heaven. I John iii. 21, 22. *Beloved, if  
 our hearts condemn us not, then we have  
 confidence towards GOD. And whatsoever  
 we ask, we receive of him; [and why?]   
 because we keep his commandments, and do  
 those things that are pleasing in his sight.*  
 It is our sincere regard to all the com-  
 mands, which he has recommended to our  
 practice, that can alone inspire us with just  
 hopes of having our prayers heard.

(3.) We

SERM. (3.) We must certainly forgive others,  
 VII. or else we have no reason to apprehend  
 that we shall have our addresses accepted.

This is expressed very strongly and clearly, Mark xi. 25, 26. *And, when ye stand praying, forgive; if ye have aught against any; that your father, also, who is in heaven, may forgive ye your trespasses. But, if you do not forgive; neither will your father, who is in heaven, forgive your trespasses.* No words could have expressed this with greater clearness and strength. It is vain, therefore, to suppose, that, when we address our prayer to GOD, *to forgive us our sins*, we should have this prayer answered, if we retain an unforgiving temper of mind. Matt. v. 23, 24. *If thou bring thy gift to the altar; and there remembrest thy brother has aught against thee: Leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother; and then come, and offer thy gift.* Do not flatter thyself with a vain apprehension, that thy sacrifices and worship will be pleasing to GOD; if thou doest not, to thy brother, that which is just and equitable, kind and merciful.

(4.) Another limitation, laid down in the revelation of GOD, is, that, when we  
 have

have done what is unjust or unrighteous to SERM.  
our neighbor, we should make a proper resti- VII.  
tution ; before ever we can suppose that any  
of our addressees will be pleasing to that Being,  
who is described as just and righteous, and  
whose throne is established in righteousness.

See how this is expressed, Psalm xxiv.

6. *I will wash mine hands in innocency ; so  
will I compass thine altar, O Lord.* If I  
am conscious of having done what is un-  
righteous, I will take a proper method to  
have that crime, or guilt, taken away.  
And, then, will I address, with a firm  
hope, that I shall have my prayers heard  
and answered.

(5.) We are to take care that we offer  
up our prayers to God, with uprightness,  
and faith in God ; and without wrath.

1 Tim. ii. 8. *I will, therefore, that men  
pray every where, lifting up holy hands, with-  
out wrath or doubting.*

This is necessary to give us just expec-  
tations that our prayers will be pleasing to  
God.

2. There are other restrictions, or li-  
mitations, laid down in *revelation*, in re-  
ference to the *matter* of our prayers.

1 John



SERM. I John v. 14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him* [or concerning him] *that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* And, therefore, the apostle *James* represents, that they could not have their prayers answered, because they asked amiss; that they might gratifie their lusts. *James* iv. 3.

It is in vain to address unto God, for riches and power : and for no other design, but that, by them, we may gratifie every desire, how inordinate or unreasonable forever.

We are to take care that we ask, in such a manner, as may be most proper to advance the glory of God. That I may represent this in a clear light, let us consider. If I pray to God that I may be preserved from temptation, it is a very proper prayer. But, if I will not exert my power; if I will rush into every difficult circumstance, whereby I may be tempted; — it is really mocking God, to pray for that, which I am not reconciled to the pursuit of, in my conduct. To pray to God, for the pardon of sin; when I know that it cannot be given, but to such as truly  
repent

repent; and yet never attempt to gain a SERM.  
victory over the sin, which I implore of VII.  
God to pardon;—this is really a doing  
that which is inconsistent to the divine  
counsels, as well as contrary to the nature  
and reason of things. We must pray for  
things that are agreeable to the will of  
God reveled to us. To pray only for tem-  
poral blessings, and with the greatest ar-  
dor; at the same time that we have but  
little concern for spiritual good things, is  
acting quite contrary to that religion, which  
we profess.

We are, also, to take care that we pray  
for things, which relate to our present hap-  
piness, with a due subserviency to the wis-  
dom of the creator. I know no reason,  
that any well-instructed Christian has, to  
pray with an hope, that he shall have every  
particular blessing, which he prays for,  
at the hands of God. We are to pray  
that we may be under his direction; that  
we may receive, at his kind hands, what  
he knows to be proper to make us truly  
happy. And whoever has a just and right  
idea of the great things of this world, must  
see, that there are tendencies, in what we

SERM. call, and look upon to be,  *blessings*, in this  
 VII. life; to render those, that possess them,  
 ~~~~~ unhappy. And it is not in the power of  
 the wisest man, to know how to address
 to God, for things relating to this world,
 without submitting to him, whose wisdom
 is consummate, and whose goodness is
 great and abundant. That, which we
 desire, might ruine us. And there are
 thousands, that are ruined by trusting to
 their own wisdom.

We are to take care to *pray to God*,
 for those things, in the first place, which
 are of the last importance. And, when
 we address to him, for the things of this
 world, we are not to address to him, for
 any temporal blessing, without a due sense
 that we are insufficient for our own di-
 rection. And, therefore, we should leave
 him to carve out for us, as he knows best,
 to render us for-ever happy.

3. There are restrictions, laid down in
 scripture, in reference to the *manner*, as
 well as the *matter*, of our prayers.

(1.) When we have gained proper dis-
 positions, or qualifications; and are in-
 structed in the matter of prayer; then we
 are

are to exercise *faith*. Matt. xxi. 21, 22. SERM.
Jesus answered and said unto them, "Ve- VII.

rily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and 
doubt not; — all things, whatsoever ye shall
ask in prayer; believing, ye shall receive."

We are to *ask in faith*, i. e. in a firm persuasion, that prayers, rightly directed, and offered by persons that have the proper qualifications, will be pleasing and acceptable to God: and that such persons shall receive the blessings, proper to make them happy. James i. 6. *Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he, that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed.*

(2.) Our prayers are to be continual: though we should not receive some particular blessings, to which we have a very warm and ardent desire.

This is represented to us in a very clear and strong manner, Luke xviii. 1. *He spake a parable to them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* We are to persevere in our addresses to God. And, though we are not immediately answered, we are not to omit this duty; but continue in it. Ephes. vi. 18.

SERM. *Praying always, with all prayer and supplication, in the spirit; and watching thereunto, with all perseverance.* We are to

VII.

pray; to persevere in it; to watch and observe the answers, which we receive from God; what effect, what influence, our prayers have upon our hearts, and our œconomy. This is the way that we ought to address unto God.

(3, lastly.) We are to pray, and pursue this prayer into practice.

A great many imagine that, when they have addressed to heaven, there is nothing remaining for them to do. But this is a mistake. If we pray for strength against sin, or against the temptations of this life; and do not watch, as well as pray; or do not use the means, that are proper, to give us the victory: we certainly offend, in the manner of our addresses.

Thus I have set before you those limitations, which *revelation* lays before us. And these appear necessary to be attended to, and considered. Our Savior says, *Ask and it shall be given.* Many ask, and it is not given. And then they imagine that our Savior's promise is not fulfilled. Have you
asked

asked in a proper disposition? Have you asked agreeably to the will of GOD? Have you asked in a right manner? Do not imagine that this promise is not accomplished because you have not received, immediately, the blessings, which you addressed to heaven for. *Revelation* supposes such qualifications, in those that are worshipers; viz. that they take care to offer to heaven their prayers, agreeably to the will of GOD: and with faith; and with steddiness; persevering in the practice of this duty; and pursuing their prayers into the conduct of their lives. Now, when all these are performed, I believe no person, that ever addressed to heaven; but will, by his own experience, be able to say, that the promise, which our Savior here gives, has been performed.

III. The illustration, that our Savior here gives, is exceding elegant and beautiful. *What man is there of you; whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?* I appeal to you, who are my disciples, whether you ever observed a father, who had an affection for his child; that,

SERM. *when he asked bread, he gave him a stone,*
 VII. *which may have the appearance of bread,*
 ~~~~~ *but is quite unprofitable and useless. Or,*  
*if he asked a fish, he gave him a serpent ;*  
*which may have some resemblance of a*  
*fish ; but, instead of being useful, would*  
*be hurtful. Can you imagine that will*  
*come from a tender father, to his descen-*  
*dent? No! it is quite unnatural. Now,*  
*our Savior argues from the less to the grea-*  
*ter. If you being evil: i. e. If you, who*  
*are not steddily beneficent and kind; but*  
*are sometimes carried away, by passion,*  
*and the like: If you, who are less bene-*  
*ficent and kind, know how to give good*  
*gifts to your children; how much more will*  
*your heavenly father (who is the author of*  
*that tenderness, which there is in an earthly*  
*parent to his children: how much more*  
*will he) give good things to them that ask*  
*him?*

Every one, that attends, will easily see,  
 that this carries in it considerable strength  
 and force of argument. For, if God is  
 the first and most perfect Being; if his  
 goodness is superlative and abundant; Can  
 any one imagine, that, when he has plac-  
 ed

ed affection in earthly parents to their children, to such a degree, that they will not refuse their off-spring what is necessary; and much less give them what is hurtful; — Can any imagine, that this beneficent Being will not be disposed to impart, to those that are his children, what is necessary to make them really happy; and to prepare them, and make them meet, for complete happiness, in a future and better state?

SERM.  
VII.  
~~~~~

IV. I shall now make practical reflections; and so conclude.

1. Perhaps, from what has been said, a reason may be offered, why some, in this age, appear so strenuous opposers of this duty of *prayer*. It may be surprizing, when their character is moral. What can be the reason, why they should not like to address to him, that is their heavenly father? When praying to God produces such happy effects; as to enlarge the mind; and to better the very frame and temper of our spirits? This duty, of addressing to God, brings me nearest to his moral perfections. “But must I banish such an irregular inclination?”

SERM. " cination? Must I be reconciled, by it,

VII. " to the practice of extensive virtue? Must

~~~~~ " I, before I can form an hope of having

" my prayers answered, be reconciled to

" my offended brother?" This is so un-

grateful to men of courage and spirit; that

it is not so easy to bring the mind to sub-

mit to it. Others are unwilling to make

restitution. " Must this be requisite to

" address to a righteous Deity? When I

" have done wrong, and have no inclina-

" tion to make reparation?" They may

possibly say, " that these things are hard

to be practised." And, therefore, they

are not very willing to be brought to ac-

knowledge this to be a duty. " Must I

" not expect to have my prayers answered,

" if they are not offered suitable to his

" will?" " You say, *I must pray in faith;*

" *and forgive others; and continue in this*

" *duty; and pursue it into life.* These

" things require much more than the

" gay life which I am determined to pur-

" sue, will admit of." *Is it so?* Surely

it is what heightens your guilt: and ren-

ders you more exposed to the divine dis-

pleasure and resentment.

2. I would

2. I would observe the weakness of some good Christians. SERM.  
VII.

It is easy to observe, that there are some sincere disciples of Christ, who are always complaining; "I pray to God, and address to him, but he turns a deaf ear to all the addresses, which I make to him." And if you ask them why? You will find it is because God has not granted that particular blessing, which they asked of him. How surprizing is this! I am not to ask any blessing of this life, without an intire submission to his will. He has not rejected my prayer; because he did not impart that particular favor, which I petitioned for. If I find, by my addresses to him, every virtue growing to higher perfection; my prayers then are answered, in the highest and greatest instances. And I have no reason to call in doubt, the veracity of *the son of God*; when he promises, *Ask, and it shall be given*. Let us endeavor to gain just, true, and right sentiments. And then, we shall see that there is no reason for such complaints.

3. Let

SERM. 3. Let us observe how happy an instrument prayer is, to the pursuit of virtue, in its proper extent; and to gain an ascendent over the temptations of a sensible world.

It is an happy instrument of promoting a temper and conduct of life, agreeable to the most refined and perfect rules of the Christian doctrine. And give me leave to remark,

4. That they are cruel and unkind to themselves, who neglect this duty of prayer.

I would be far from censuring, where there is not all the steddiness and constancy, in the performance of this duty, that is recommended. But this I will venture to say: The more we address in a proper manner, the more we shall feel the heavenly state growing up to perfection. We shall find that we can converse with things which are spiritual and heavenly, with greater ease and delight. And we shall be formed, in our temper, and made more meet, for those joys, which are spiritual, and at the right hand of GOD. Let us, therefore, continue and persevere in this duty; and practise it, in a firm hope, that  
we

we shall receive all proper blessings at the hand of God. SERM.  
VII.

Let us go to the throne of grace, with a firm assurance of faith: always expressing our desires with a becoming humility. Let us not presume to use such addresses, as are no way agreeable to the character which we bear, as creatures, at an infinite distance from the creator. Let us mingle hope, faith, and humility, with all the other virtues of the Christian character. Let us hold out, and continue stedfast in this duty; by which we shall easily find, that we shall stand more firm against all the shocks and temptations of this present world. We shall, by this, be kept and preserved from vice; and shall have every virtue, and fruit of the spirit, which the religion of Christ recommends, growing up in us, to a greater measure of perfection. And, let us weigh, with seriousness, that elegant illustration here offered. Do we know the affection of a parent to a child? Let us consider; God has infinitely greater dispositions of goodness and affection to his children, than the kindest and most tender parent has to his off-spring. We  
should



SERM. should thus encourage ourselves to go on,

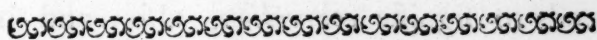
VII. in the duty here recommended, with steadfastness; being firmly persuaded, that we shall receive, from our heavenly father, every expression of his goodness, which he, in his infinite wisdom, sees necessary and proper for us.





## S E R M O N VIII.

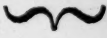
The benefit of submitting to re-  
proof.



P R O V. XXIX. I.

*He that, being often reprov'd, hard-  
neth his neck, shall suddenly be  
destroyed, and that without re-  
medy.*



E shall endeavor to explain S E R M.  
this aphorism. And then make VIII.  
practical reflections. 

I. We shall represent to you, what we  
are to understand by *being reprov'd*.

II. What by *hardening the neck*.

III. Consider the unhappy effects of  
such a conduct. Such *shall be suddenly de-  
stroyed, and that without remedy*.

IV. Lay

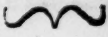
SERM. IV. Lay before you the reason of this  
 VIII. truth; that he, who rejects reproof, and  
 hardneth his heart, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

I. The word *reproof* is so clear that it would be needless to attempt to explain it. I shall only remark that the hebrew word stands to signifie *correction*, also; and is often used in that sense, in this book of *Proverbs*.

*Reproof* (or *correction*) may be considered as refering to men; or as having a regard to the great and wise governor of the world. As it respects men, there cannot be an office of greater goodness than that of *reproof*, when performed in a prudent manner.

*Reproof* always respects an irregular temper, or action. And ought never to be done to gratifie humor, or with resentment; or to express our dislike of the behavior of another, only because it does not suit our sentiments, or dispositions.

There is nothing more frequently displeasing, than *reproof*. And nothing ought to be the ground of *reproof*, but what  
 is

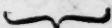
is immoral ; something, that appears to SERM.  
arise from a disorder of the soul. And, if VIII.  
what we think proper to reprove, is a   
mere weakness, not attended with ill consequences, we may very well omit it. But, when any go on in a course of irregularity, which will terminate in misery, it would be a piece of cruelty, not to represent what is proper to reclaim such a person. When this is done by superiors, who have power over the person reprov'd, there may be added *correction*: but in the wisest manner, and in the coolest way; without mingling warmth of passion, or resentment. No-one should either *reprove* or *correct*, but in such a way, as is proper to convince the person reprov'd, that he aims at his happiness, and designs nothing but his real good.

Again: we may view this, as referring to GOD. He does instruct, reprove, and correct. And it will not be amiss to set before you, the way, by which GOD instructs, reprov's, and corrects. He does this by the light of our minds. He has given us powers, capable of seeing with great ease, our duty. And we as readily discern



SERM. discern the excellency and beauty of virtue and piety, as light does distinguish colors. And such is our frame, that, till we treat conscience with cruelty, it will ever dictate to us what is right and fit. We may, indeed, lay it asleep; or, by a frequent conduct, contrary to its dictates we may acquire an habit of thinking carelessly. But there is no one, but what experiences the truth of what I have asserted. And no one can be vitious, in the greatest instances, but he must pass through great conflicts; arising from that light, that candle of the Lord, which our creator has placed in us, to direct our actions.

And, as the divine Being instructs, reproves, and corrects us, this way: so, also, he has added *revelation*; and set before us such motives; as (if attended to) greatly weaken the temptations, which surround us, in this life. We are indeed placed in a state, that is very low; though there is nothing in our frame, that is improper. Our appetites, passions, and affections are just such as our present situation requires. But yet, appetite and passion taking possession

effion, antecedent to reason, opened with SERM.  
any clearness and extensive view, we have VIII.  
a difficulty of conquering some early ha- 

bits. Indeed, this is not difficult, till they become exceding strong. However, it appears very plain, that the religion of favor (I mean *revelation*) has given us precepts, attended with a weight of authority; and has set before us a perfect pattern; and has represented future rewards, in a very distinct and clear light; has assured us that our past guilt shall not prevent our finding favor from the great governor of the world; if we turn from vice to the practice of virtue, in the future part of our lives.

Now, when the presence of a sensible scene offers to us what will gratifie irregular, sensual appetites: or the attaining, by improper methods, a large estate or great possessions, high honors or applause from our fellow creatures; God checks us in the pursuit of them, by representing, that there is a better world than this; and that we make a wrong choice, if we prefer uncertain riches before the lasting treasures of a future life; and reveles to us, that

SERM. the pleasures of a virtuous and holy mind  
VIII. are infinitely preferable to the uncertain  
pleasures of sense, which soon will have  
an end, and can never be reviewed but  
with regret; and that there is no honor  
like that which cometh from God.—In  
this way, God instructs and reprove.  
Again: he instructs, reprove, and cor-  
rects, by the consequences of our actions.  
Virtue is attended with happy effects, and  
vice with very mischievous ones. There  
is no interest, that we can have in prospect,  
but what is hurt by vice, and promoted  
by virtue. The vigor of the mind, health  
of constitution, an unstained reputation;  
and inward joys, springing from the hopes  
of a future life: — These are the happy  
effects, which attend real piety and exten-  
sive virtue.

On the other hand; vice is accompa-  
nied with chagrin and uneasiness. And  
the person, that practises it, cannot bear  
solid reflections. He is wild in the pur-  
suit of his own ruine and destruction. He  
feels the unhappy effects of vice begun  
here: and, thereby, is raised in him a  
dreadful apprehension of what will be the  
state,

state, to which the righteous judge of the world shall assign him, hereafter. It is from GOD that this wise finished plan proceeds. It is by him, that every thing is conducted. It is from his providence, that we have such lessons, such reproofs, and such corrections. GOD speaks, by the effects of his government, whether there be any direct offence, which occasions afflictions to us, or not. We are not to suppose that GOD sends every trial upon us, here, as the consequence of some particular crime or crimes. But still, by such instances of his providence, his design is to raise our attention, to awaken our thoughts, and lead us to consider. For we are very apt to fall asleep.

When we lose our friends; or have some other great afflictions come near us; we, then, are excited to consider the rules of conduct, that we are under; and to trace, in our thoughts, the whole series of our past actions. Afflictions, in the design of GOD, are disciplinary. And, I must confess, I do not know whether there be any affliction, which befalls us here, that is (strictly speaking) designed to punish. This



SERM. is not a state, in which the governor of  
 VIII. the world punishes, or rewards. It ap-  
 ~~~~~ appears to be the wise and kind design of  
 heaven; that, by these trials, we might
 be excited to reflection; and brought to
 that temper, which is necessary to make
 us meet for complete happiness, in another
 world. And, of consequence, they are
 disciplinary.

Thus I have represented to you, in what
 way the governor of the world instructs,
 reprove, and corrects. He does it, by
 our conscience; and by setting before us,
 by *revelation*, such prospects, as may weak-
 en and abate the force of the temptations,
 which arise from a sensible world. He
 does it, by the consequences of our own
 actions; and by the various terms of his
 government, and providence towards us.

II. I am to explain what is meant by
hardening the neck.

The learned *Bochart* remarks, very just-
 ly, that this is a metaphor taken from
oxen yoked. When any pulled back their
 neck, and would not draw the plough,
 it was an usual expression, that such a
 one

Submitting to reproof.

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one *hardened the neck*. *Hardening the neck*, SERM.
therefore, is refusing to receive reproof, or VIII.
instruction, from others; either from our
fellow-creatures, or from our great creator
and governor.

III. It was proposed to consider the unhappy effect, which will attend such a conduct. *He that, being often reprov'd, hardneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

It is not said, that he, who once or twice, refuses to yield to the kind reproofs of his fellow-creatures, or of his creator, shall fall into immediate distress and destruction. But he that *often* does it. He, that has contracted an indisposition to receive reproof, or correction, let it be administered in the kindest way. He, that has this character, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. This is a very unhappy case.

IV. Permit me to set before you, the reasons, upon which this truth is founded.

The mercy and goodness of God is certainly very great; and we cannot suppose,

SERM. pose, that he, who by goodness formed
VIII. us, is not disposed to make us happy ; unless we, by our temper and behavior, render ourselves unfit subjects for happiness. And this is the very case. He, that often is reproved by his friend ; or by his creator ; in order to be recovered to piety and virtue ; and yet hardneth his heart against all the efforts of wisdom and goodness to reclaim him : I say, he, in consequence, puts himself in a situation, that is extremely unhappy ; and will be attended with inevitable ruine. Whoever withstands all the methods of salvation, can never form hopes of a recovery. We see it absurd to hope for a recovery from a dangerous disease, when there is a prospect of death, and persons refuse to take any method proper to abate the unhappy symptoms. This is the case of the man habituated to vice, who has attained so great a strength of resolution, in the pursuit of it, that he scorns the gentlest methods to reclaim him, so that neither his friend, nor his God, can win upon him. His friend looks upon him, and kindly would impart to him lessons ; which, if complied with,

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VIII.

with, would be the happy means of his recovery; but he is disregarded. And even his God, his creator and constant benefactor, has no better treatment from him; when he pursues him by his own conscience; by the sacred writings, or word of God; and by providence; for his reproof and correction. He is like a bull, caught in a net; so far from being disposed to be tamed, that he only struggles and chafes the more: and expresses, in the highest manner, his repining and murmuring. He, that thus refuses reproof, is in a situation, that all the kindest methods of God and *men* will have little or no effect upon him. And then, destruction and ruine, without remedy, must be the consequence. We can never imagine that such an one is capable of being happy. He does not see true, but shuts his eyes against the light. And, as he has by vice considerably darkened his mind, and strengthened his passions; and brought himself to such an headstrong behavior, that his dearest friends, and even the father of mercies, cannot be admitted to an hearing: it is no surprize, that such

SERM. an one comes to ruine; and in a sudden
 VIII. way, and without remedy.

Thus have I explained to you this aphorism. Give me leave to conclude with practical reflections.

1. Let us learn the best way of reprov-
 ing. Let us consider what is fit to be re-
 proved; and the manner, in which it
 should be practised. It deserves our atten-
 tion and learning. There is no higher of-
 fice of goodness, that can be done to one
 another, than *reproving*; when it is per-
 formed in a right way, and when it ap-
 pears to be designed only for the welfare
 of those that are reprovèd.

It is not to be done always. This
 would make life unpleasant. But yet, it
 is certainly an office, that is of the high-
 est value.

In order to do it right, we must settle
 in our minds, that it ought never to be
 done, but in cases of immorality; or, at
 least, that it be done, in such a manner,
 as to make the person see, that we do not
 lay so much stress upon that which is in-
 different, and not so essential to the hap-
 piness of the reasonable nature.

It

It ought to be done in private. I de- SERM.
fire you would attend to this. It is vast- VIII.
ly absurd to imagine, that you can reclaim
what is irregular, by public reproofs.
They always stab a man; so that his re-
sentment is only smothered, till some pro-
per time discovers that your way of reproof
was quite wrong.

It ought to be done in a gentle man-
ner; from a sense of our love, and a friend-
ly regard to his happiness. And this will
always bind generous minds, to look upon
them, as instances of friendship, that de-
serve the highest praise.

2. We should ourselves learn to bear
reproof.

It is hard to say which of them is the
most difficult part of our duty; to bear,
or to give, reproof: and who is the great-
er person; he, that rightly gives reproof,
or he that well receives it.

To give reproof, is what requires con-
siderable, cool reflection. And to receive
it well, is as great an instance of what is
truly commendable, as a right giving of
it. I do not mean a putting on a show of
receiving it well. I do not call an appear-
ance

SERM. ance of taking reproof aright, commend-
 VIII. able. No: there may be an internal re-
 { sentiment, that shall afterwards discover
 itself, and convince you that your reproof
 was not well received.

Receiving reproof aright, is not only
 saying, in good humor, *We take it well*:
 but retireing, and reflecting, whether there
 is a just occasion for this. And, if there
 is, that we immediately amend. This is
 the design of God: and ought to be the
 happy effect of our having a gentle re-
 proof from a friend.

If we will take a view of the book of
Proverbs, we shall find a great many pro-
 verbs, which express the excellency of re-
 ceiving reproof. And there is represent-
 ed the danger, and hazard, of those, that
 are got above reproof, and that are indis-
 posed to receive even the reproof that
 comes from the hand of God.

3. We should take care to settle in our
 minds, the ways, which God takes, to
 seal instruction upon our hearts, and to
 reprove and correct us.

There are too many like the wild ass's
 colt. They continue in such actions, as
 to

to make that resemblance fit. They pass SERM.
their lives, without much reflecting upon VIII.
their own frame; or the end of reproofs; {
or the rules of conduct, which the governor of the world has prescribed to them. Whereas it becomes us to settle, with clearness and in a distinct manner, the ways, which our creator and governor takes, to bring us to that which is the end of our creation, the perfection of our make, and the foundation of its real happiness.

We should act agreeably to the dictates of *reason*; and settle in our minds, that the design of *revelation* is extensive virtue and real piety. And we should not ground our expectations of future happiness upon any thing short of a divine temper and a good life.

The course of divine providence towards us is intended to train us up to piety and holiness; and we ought to make the best use of every turn of divine conduct, for this purpose. This is the design, with which God has been pleased to connect with different actions different consequences. And, in the government of the world, he sends afflictions, upon us; that
we

SERM. we may attend to them, and act agreeably to our reasonable frame. And, when
 VIII. we have this settled in our minds (when we are convinced that he instructs us, by our consciences, by revelation, or by the course of his government) we shall then be in a proper way of seeing the wisdom and goodness of the governor of the world. But let us dread the character of those, who reject the kind methods, which God has taken to instruct, reprove, and correct us.

No wise man, that knows any thing of his nature, but will dread habits of vice. Indeed, thoughtless persons neglect to attend to this, till they feel such strong habits growing in them, as baffle and defeat their purposes and resolutions. And then they sink into despair; and rush on (like an horse into the battle) into the practice of the most enormous vices. This is a most sad and a most desperate state. And unto such is destruction threatened, in our text. However: we have all the advantages imaginable, to prevent any bad habits fixing in us. We are formed more for virtue than vice. We have reason and conscience; and we have repeated instructions

tions given us, by the divine Being, not only in his word, but in the course of his providence. And, if, after all these, any attain the character of *stiff-necked*; without doubt, their condition is hazardous; and they are obnoxious to sudden and unexpected ruine and destruction. And how can it be otherwise; when they are not in a way of being convinced of their folly? They have shut their eyes against all the light, which God has granted them. And they have contracted such an hardness of heart, that they have no principles. But then, they have brought this upon themselves. God has given them light sufficient to direct them; and has placed in them principles, that have a tendency to right practice. And, indeed, this will be a circumstance to aggravate the unhappiness of those that harden their necks, and fall into immediate distress and affliction. If they have any gleam of light, it will break into their minds; it will fill them with these distressing thoughts; "I had once a kind and gentle friend; but "I would not hear. God himself did "impart the knowledge of his will; and

"I

SERM. " I felt a kind of regret in my course

VIII. " of vice : but I disregarded that still voice

~~~~~ " of my creator. Now he appears to  
 " break in upon me with terrible power.  
 " But I find it is the consequence of my  
 " own folly. And I have expressed such  
 " a temper, that I am not in a disposition  
 " to return. The power, which sin has  
 " gained, is too strong. And how can I  
 " be certain, that he will admit me to  
 " mercy ; when he has told me that, if  
 " I disregarded his reproof, he will bring  
 " sudden ruine upon me ? "

Thus it appears clear, that it is of the  
 last importance, what habits we fix and  
 settle.

Let us contract an habit of attending  
 to truth. Let us have a due regard to  
 the love of God, and *others*, upon which  
 all our duties depend. Let us listen to  
 instructions ; whether they come from our  
 friends, or from him who is the father  
 of lights.

To conclude ; Let us take care, that we  
 act in such a manner, as is suitable to the  
 dignity of our reasonable nature. Let us  
 pursue

*Submitting to reproof.*

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pursue that, which will give a real bright-SERM.  
ness and lustre to our intelligent powers; VIII.  
which will afford the truest pleasure, in ~~~~~  
reflection; and which will lay a firm  
foundation, in our minds, of endless and  
perfect happiness, in a future world.



S E R-



which will give a full and complete  
 view of the history of the  
 world, and of the progress of  
 civilization, from the earliest  
 times to the present day.





## S E R M O N IX.

The nature of the Christian religion.



JOHN viii. 12.

*Then spake Jesus again unto them,  
saying, " I am the light of the  
" world. He, that followeth  
" me, shall not walk in dark-  
" ness; but shall have the light  
" of life."*



IN the preceding chapter, SERM.  
we find, that, in the last IX.  
day, that great day, of the  
feast of tabernacles, our Sa-  
vior stood up, and cried,  
*Whoever thirsteth, let him come unto me,  
and drink. He, that believeth in me, out*  
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SERM. *of his belly shall flow rivers of living*  
IX. *water.*

After the end of that speech, every one retiring, our Savior went unto the mount of olives; whether nigh *Bethany*, or any other village, is not capable of being determined. However; it was not far remote from the city of *Jerusalem*. The reason of his retiring, in all probability, was, to avoid the artful methods, which the scribes and pharisees were disposed to take, in order to put an end to his life, before the time.

He returned early in the morning, and came into the temple. And all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them. In the mean time, the scribes and pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery. Their design was to insnare our Savior. Our Lord, however, avoided giving an answer, that might render him exposed. *Then spake Jesus again* (i. e. after this interruption was over) *saying, "I am the light of the world. He, " that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness; but shall have the light of life."*

I. In the words, we have the character, which our Savior gives of himself. *I am the light of the world.*

II. The happy advantages, which arise to those, who, by considering this character, shall act conformably to it. *He that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness; but shall have the light of life.*

It is remarkable, that, in most of the places, where our Savior makes use of a metaphor, to represent himself, or his doctrine, he takes occasion from something that did arise. In the second verse of this chapter, it is said, *Early in the morning*; i. e. before the sun arose, or, about the time of his rising. This occasioned our Savior, in his instructing the people, who came to the temple, to say, *That he was the light of the world.*

This character agrees to the prophetic, *Isa. xlix. 6.* Where the Messiah is described as *the light of the gentiles.* And, *Luke ii. 32.* He is called, *a light to enlighten the gentiles: and the glory of his people, Israel.*



SERM.

IX.

When our Savior characterized himself as *light*, he led those, who were present, to consider him as the *Messiah*. Since, under this title, the prophets mention the *Messiah*. We may here remark the skill and wisdom of our Lord, who did not call himself by the term, *Messiah*; which always, by the Jews, was understood to denote that he was a *King*. But he makes use of figurative characters; which expressed the same thing; and did not expose him to the charge of any tumult, which might arise from their apprehension of him, as a *King*. And we know that, after feeding five thousand, with a few loaves and fishes, they attempted, by force, to set him up as a *King*.

The extent of his doctrine is expressed, in the following words, *I am the light of the world*; not intending to have my doctrine and instructions limited, or confined to one nation; but that they may be spread among the Gentiles, as well as the Jews. John i. 9. Our Savior is represented as the *true light*. *That was the true light, which lighteth every man, who cometh into the world*. The verse might be as well rendered thus,  
*That* .

*That was the true light, which, coming* SERM.  
*into the world, enlighteneth every man;* IX.

Gentiles, as well as Jews. John iii. 19. *This is the condemnation; that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light; because their deeds were evil.* And, John ix. 5. *Our Savior again says, As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* And, John xii. 46. *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness.*

This, then, is the figurative character, which is given of our Lord. And we shall take care not to strain the metaphor; but to shew what appears to be the design, that our Savior had, when he represented himself to be *the light of the world.*

*Light* manifests all things, says the apostle, Eph. v. 13. *All things, that are reprov'd, are made manifest by the light. For whatsoever doeth make manifest, is LIGHT.* This appears to be the intent of the figure, when our Savior says, that he was *the light of the world*; that is, He came, as an instructor; with a commission from his father, to teach all mankind,

SERM. whether Jews or Gentiles; and to set, in  
 IX. a proper view, those things, which are  
 necessary to direct men, in their conduct,  
 to the path of everlasting happiness.

It will, then, be necessary for me to consider, in what respects our Savior is *Light*; as having manifested to us what is of the utmost importance, to bring us to everlasting happiness and glory. — He has set before us the perfections of the one, true God. He has opened to us not only that there is one God; but has plainly taught us, *that this one God is the father*. This was a point of absolute necessity. The generality of the world had run into idolatry and polytheism. *The Jews*, indeed, maintained *that the Lord Jehovah was one Jehovah*: and *that there was but one God*. But this was not what the *Gentiles* entertained. Therefore he, who was *the light of the whole world*; and of the *Gentiles*, in particular; has opened to them, in his revelation, that there is but one, only, living and true God.

In his doctrine, our Lord gave the clearest and justest notions of the perfections

tions of that *one* GOD. Others, who SERM.  
had only the light of nature, apprehending IX.  
that GOD was a terrible Being, he has set,   
in the strongest point of view, that this  
*one* GOD is the father of mercies, and the  
GOD of all consolation; that he is love;  
and that he is disposed to make all his  
creatures, as happy, as their powers are  
capable of. There is no doctrine, that  
has given us so amiable views of GOD,  
even the father; as that, which is deli-  
vered to us by CHRIST and his apostles.  
He has set before us, all the duties, which  
refer to GOD, to *others*, and to *ourselves*,  
in the purest and most extensive light.  
*Reason*, cultivated to a proper height, does  
indeed discover the same moral duties,  
which the Christian religion recommends.  
But we have no writer, that has trans-  
mitted those duties, in so clear, certain,  
and unmixed a light, as CHRIST has,  
in his doctrine. Every thing, that has the  
least mixture of superstition, is removed.  
Though GOD favored the Jews with a re-  
velation of his will, as perfect as their  
circumstances would admit; yet the peo-  
ple, to whom that revelation was given,



SERM. ran into very wrong sentiments; imagining that sacrifices, alone, would recommend them to the divine favor; and entertaining an opinion, that, as they descended from *Abraham*, they had a title to the blessings of the other world. Their writers asserted, that no *Israelite* should fail of attaining the reward of the future life. They laid mighty stress upon days, and moons, and distinct sorts of food. Our Lord, as the light that was sent from the father, to open his counsels, assured them, that their descending from *Abraham* would not intitle them to the favor of God and the happiness of the other life. He set before them, in a strong light, the weakness of their hopes of the Divine favor, upon an exact performance of the ceremonies of the law. And, in lieu of those superstitions, he opened to them sincere piety and universal righteousness and beneficence. He not only delivered a doctrine, that had no superstition mingled with it; but he set it in the most extensive light. He has taught us *self-government*; by recommending meekness, humility, contentedness with our state: and a moderate degree

gree of the pursuit of the things of this SERM.  
world. He has inculcated upon us the IX.  
performance of universal righteousness and  
beneficence; and enjoined us to love even  
our enemies. To this end, he has set be-  
fore us, the highest pattern, even that of  
the supreme Being; and called upon us  
*to be perfect, even as he is perfect; and  
merciful, as he is merciful.* He has taught  
us the true principle, from whence all du-  
ties are to take their rise; viz. not from  
a regard to men, or from a view of honor  
and interest in this world; but from a  
disposition to approve ourselves to our  
creator and governor. Christianity in-  
forms us that we are to practise these  
duties, with a view of being so happy in  
another world, as to be free from every  
imperfection; and of being possessed of a  
perfect moral character, or resembling  
God, in his moral character; so as not  
to have any moral imperfection attend-  
ing us.

This is the scheme of the Christian  
doctrine. It teaches all of us what we  
are obliged to practise, as we stand related  
one to another. It instructs parents to be-  
have

SERM. have well to their children; and children

IX. to be obedient to their parents. It teaches the duties of masters to servants, and servants to masters; husbands to their wives, and wives to their husbands. There is no character, that we bear, in this life; but we have full instructions, relating to our conduct. So that, considering it in this view, we may see how fit it is, that our Savior should take to himself the character of being *the light of the world*.

Besides: as he has thus instructed us, and manifested to us our duty, in a pure, unmixed, and extensive light. He has also favored us with a finished and unspotted pattern. There is no duty, that he enjoins us to practise, but what he has illustrated by his own complete example. This is what the world stood in need of. The practice of piety and virtue, among men, was very imperfect. There was no one, whom they could propose to themselves, as an example; and follow, without some danger of mistaking the path. But this is the advantage, that we have, by CHRIST's being *the light of the world*. He came from heaven; and lived a life  
free

free from every imperfection, a life properly divine. And he thus leads us into a behavior, proper to raise us, as reasonable Beings, to the highest excellency, and most perfect moral character. SERM.  
IX.

Again : Our Savior may be well said to be *the light of the world* ; inasmuch as he has opened to us a future state ; and has given us a prospect of such rewards and punishments ; as may (if attended to) be effectual to engage us to walk in the *light*, and to behave becoming the character of *the children of light*.

The encouragements, which the Christian religion has given us, are of the highest nature ; as well as represented in the clearest light. The doctrine of the remission of sins to the truly penitent ; and a clear description of that repentance, which is sincere, and ends in amendment ; are great advantages. The assistances, which Christianity promises, are exactly proportionate to the difficulties that we are called to encounter with. And the happiness of the other world is unveiled, and set before us in as strong a light, as our imperfect state will admit of. Now, upon all these



SERM. accounts, we may see the justness of the

IX. figure, which our Savior here makes use of; when he says of himself, *I am the light of the world.* that is, “ I came  
 “ from the bosom of my father, with a  
 “ commission from him, to open fully  
 “ his counsels, designed to bring reasonable creatures to perfect happiness. I  
 “ have set before them precepts, that are  
 “ pure and unmingled, in so extensive a  
 “ light, that there is no branch of duty,  
 “ which men can be at a loss to know.  
 “ *I am the light of the world.* I have  
 “ opened the nature of virtue and piety;  
 “ and of the happiness, which is proposed as a reward; and shewn the necessary connection between the one and  
 “ the other. I have given all proper encouragements, all suitable motives, to  
 “ influence and engage to the practice of  
 “ that, which has a fitness to exalt reasonable nature, and to make it meet for  
 “ being happy for-ever. *I am the light of the world:* like the sun, to spread  
 “ my rays all over this frame of things.”

When God reveled his will to the *Jews*, it was, in a great measure, limited to one nation

nation. But, when CHRIST, *the sun of righteousness* arose, with healing under his wings; it was his intent, that, by spreading the rays, they should be diffused over all the race of mankind. This, no doubt, greatens the advantage of the dispensation of the gospel.

II. We procede to set before you the happy advantages, which arise to those, who, by considering this character, shall act conformably to it. *He, that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness; but shall have the light of life.*

If we attend to those instructions, which our Savior has imparted to us, we *shall not walk in darkness*: that is, we shall not have the course of our actions under the power of ignorance. We shall not (as *darkness* signifies sometimes) walk in *distress*; but we shall have *the light of life*. We shall have, effectually to guide us, this light, which will terminate in *eternal life*. For that is the meaning of this expression, *the light of life*. It denotes the light, which will safely lead and direct us to life and happiness. *Darkness* stands

SERM. stands for ignorance, and vice, and misery.

IX. *Light* stands to denote knowlege, holiness, and happiness. That, which is reveled to us, in the Christian religion, is complete and endless happiness.

This is the benefit, which will arise to those, that express a constant care and concern to direct their temper and actions, by what CHRIST, *the light of the world*, has discovered to us. His coming into the world was to lead us into the path of truth and virtue, which will terminate, at last, in a resurrection to endless life and glory. This is the design of the dispensation of the gospel, which is called *a glorious light*. And whoever profess this doctrine; and are influenced by it in their disposition and life; will, certainly, attain an happiness, that will be interminable; and make every power perfect and happy. The life, which the Christian religion has opened to our view, subsequent upon the resurrection, will be life, indeed. Then we shall have bodies different from those, which we now carry about us. We shall have bodies, spiritual, glorious, incorruptible, and immortal. The mind, united  
to

to such a body, shall be enlarged in its powers. The understanding exalted and improved. And such objects represented, in so clear a light; as, with the greatest ease, shall be conceived; and, in such a manner, as we cannot possibly attain to, in this life. And this glorious light and knowledge shall continually lead us forward into a more perfect resemblance of God, in his moral character. And, from thence, will arise joy, inexpressibly great. And this will be growing to endless ages: and never have an abatement, much less any period. This is the life, to which CHRIST, who was sent from the father, to be *the light of the world*, would lead us to the pursuit of. The design of his coming was to bring us to the image of God; raise us to his favor; and, at last, to make us meet for the happiness of the future world. He, that walketh according to this light, will not walk in darkness; but will see the light of life.

I come now to conclude this discourse, by making practical remarks.

I. We



SERM. I. We may from hence see, with what  
 IX. reason, the gospel dispensation is so earnest-  
 ly recommended to those, to whom it is  
 reveled.

OUR SAVIOR continually expressed his zeal, for spreading that light, which he received from the father; and was sent to communicate. *The apostles*, who had the characters of being *lights of the world*, continually inculcated this doctrine; and were ready to lay down their lives, to confirm the truth of it. Those, who received it, are represented to be *the children of light*. No wonder that this should be successful. For this is the light from heaven, calculated to raise reasonable nature to its proper perfection; to fit us for complete, interminable happiness and glory.

2. With what gratitude should we entertain this doctrine?

*Light* manifests worldly objects; and, at the same time, makes itself to be discerned. And the *light* of the doctrine of the gospel, is such, as makes it manifest, that it has its original from God. View its precepts; the perfection of its example; the greatness of its encouragements;

ments; and the purity, perfection, and in-terminableness of the happiness, which it promises. And you will easily, by attention, see, that it carries in it, all the traces of a divine original. And, if it does, surely we must be inexcusable, if we do not imbrace this doctrine, with the highest gratitude. Our Savior says, *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world*; which clearly and fully discovers the divine will. And men unhappily, through a love of vice, turn away from this light; discard and reject it; and are disposed to entertain any thing, rather than that which is of the last importance. Whence can it come, that so many reject this revelation? I will leave it to such, with integrity, to examine themselves. It appears to me that this religion, in all the views that we can take of it, is worthy of our most ready and thankful acceptance. The precepts of it are proper to refine our nature. The example of Christ is perfect. The encouragements are just such as our imperfect state requires. The reward is worthy of God; and is described in such a manner, as to make it appear, that it is

SERM. the result of carrying all our powers to  
 IX. their highest perfection. And pray; have  
 we not, in this view, all imaginable reason to entertain *this revelation?*

3. Let us take care *to walk as children of the light.*

That degree of sincere piety and virtue, which may perhaps save a *Jew*, or an *Heathen*, may not be sufficient to bring a Christian to everlasting life. When we have the clearest representation of duty, and the strongest motives to the practice of it, more will be required of us. This is laid down in *revelation*. He, that acts against the fullest light, is worthy of more stripes, than such as act against a less degree of light. And it is with that view, I think, that, our Savior denounces a woe against *Bethsaida* and *Chorazin*, that, when they had the advantage of his doctrine, confirmed by miracles, they did not embrace it. And, therefore, *Tyre* and *Sidon* were less exposed to the divine resentment, than they were. However; we have the highest reason to be influenced and engaged to walk like *Children of the light*. LIGHT, has arose to us, with  
 full

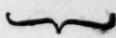
full splendor. No one need to be at a loss SERM.  
to know what he is to act. He does not IX.  
want strong motives or arguments to in-  
gage him. He has the hope and prospect  
set before him, in the strongest view, of  
everlasting happiness and glory, a weight  
of honor, and a crown of life; an in-  
corruptible crown; and such an happiness,  
as shall raise our powers to their highest  
perfection. This is the happiness, which  
(*revelation* says) will have no end. And  
what proportion is there between any  
temptation to vice, and the motives of  
the Christian religion to piety and virtue?  
Are we led to disregard the Christian re-  
ligion, by present pleasures? There are  
rivers of pleasure, which flow at the  
right hand of God, for evermore. Will  
a little interest induce us? There are  
treasures, in heaven, not liable to corrup-  
tion, or moth, or violence. Have we a  
love to honor? What honor is there, in  
another life; when we shall appear before  
the judge, and that sentence be pronounc-  
ed, “ *Well done good and faithful servants,*  
“ I viewed all the conquests, which you  
“ gained over the world and yourselves:



SERM. "Enter you into the joy of your lord: Enter into that state of happiness and glory, which I came to prepare for you?"

IX.

4. Lastly, From hence we may infer, that we are continually to press after higher attainments of every virtue of the Christian life, and not to rest satisfied with what degrees we may have already arrived at. We should *abound in the work of the Lord*, from this motive, that it is not in vain to serve him. There will be different degrees of glory and happiness conferred upon the true followers of CHRIST. Therefore, it becomes a Christian to forget the things, which are behind, in the Christian race; and to press on, in prospect of the reward: viewing CHRIST, as having marked out the race for us; and, as he has promised to return, a second time, as a rewarder of those that diligently seek him. This is the business of a Christian, to increase in the knowledge of the doctrines, which our Savior recommends; and in the love of God and *others*; to put on bowels of compassion and tenderness; and be careful to root out every thing, that is disagreeable to that tenderness and compassion

sion, that placability and forgiveness, which SERM.  
is so strongly recommended in the Christ- IX.  
ian religion. 

Let us hold on unto the end. We do not want *light* to direct us, whatever shall arise. Nay, when we are called to travel through the dark and gloomy vale of death; this light, this gospel, will cheer us. It will open to us the views of a better world; and give us the satisfaction, that, when we leave this world, there is not an end put to us; but we shall rise again, and to the possession of an heavenly inheritance. This is the excellency of the light of the gospel; that it imparts to us proper encouragements, even when we are called to pass through the vale of death. This will, then, comfort us; even the religion which we profess. And it should engage us to behave, in a manner, suitable to those that have received such great things in so clear light.

Let us therefore persevere, and hold out unto the end: constantly and carefully cultivating and improving every virtue, that so we may have a well-grounded  
P 3 hope

SERM. hope and expectation, when we are call-  
 ed out of this world, that, upon the re-  
 turn of our Savior, as judge, we shall re-  
 ceive a crown of righteousness and glory  
 that fadeth not away.

IX.

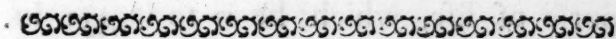


SER-



## S E R M O N X.

On education.



PROV. xxii. 6.

*Train up a child in the way he  
should go: and, when he is old,  
he will not depart from it.*



IN this aphorism, we have an SERM. exhortation given. *Train up* X.  
*a child, in the way he should*  
*go.* And a motive to induce  
us to comply with it; *When he is old, he*  
*will not depart from it,*

At first view, the sense of this aphorism  
may be supposed to express only the power  
and influence, which any habit has upon  
the conduct. But, inasmuch as *Solomon*  
continually, in this book of aphorisms,



SERM. has a regard to piety and virtue, we can-

X. not but suppose that, in the exhortation  
 here given, his design is to recommend,  
 to parents and instructors of youth, to  
 train them up in the knowlege of religion;  
 and the practice of virtue. *Train up a  
 child in the way he should go; i. e. in the  
 course of life, which he is to ingage in.*  
 And you will have this benefit; that,  
 when he is advanced in years, he will  
 not recede from that way of virtue, to  
 which he has been accustomed.

In treating on this subject, it will be  
 proper to set before you, the ways, by  
 which parents and instructors of youth are  
 to educate, and train them up.

I. By instruction.

II. By forming them, as their capacity  
 appears, to the practice of piety and  
 virtue.

III. By example.

IV. By reproof: and, if need be, cor-  
 rection.

*I. Training up a child in the way he  
 should go, implies in it instruction.*

They,

They, who have the care of young ones, are to teach them (as they are capable) the principles, which are proper to influence the conduct, agreeably to our reasonable make. And, because I know nothing more difficult, rightly to understand, and justly to practise, than the teaching of young ones, I shall be exceeding careful, in what I offer, upon this subject.

Action must, indeed, suppose some degrees of knowlege. And, in consequence, the end of *education* is to settle habits of sincere piety and real virtue. It is necessary that principles, requisite to such a temper and conduct, should be with care early laid in the minds of children. But then, we must observe, when their capacities ripen; when their understanding buds and appears; that our instruction may bear a proportion to the enlarging of their capacity.

It would be exceedingly absurd to teach principles, to children, that are very difficultly attained, by those, who are advanced to man's estate. A few principles should be instilled into their minds; and those of the last importance. And they are

SERM. are to be imparted, in a way, that is most

X. suited to their tender minds. You cannot  
 easily prove, to them, the begining of the world; or the manner of the Being of God and his perfections; and providence; and a future state. But you can, however, give them such hints as their minds appear capable of receiving; so as to lay a foundation, afterward, of more labored proofs.

When children are very young, they converse with their parents. And it is easy to let them know, that there is a parent of us all; and that he is the first Being; who continually expresses much greater bounty to all, than parents do to their off-spring.

It is no difficult thing, if we consult the easiest manner of conveying necessary principles, to find out ways of addressing the tender minds of children, so, as to give them clear ideas of those principles, which are of the last importance.

But, then, we must take great care, when we teach them principles, to remember, that we are to convince their minds, and lay before their understanding nothing, that

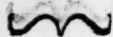
that is superior to their age, much less what in itself is obscure, and perhaps hardly to be understood at all. It is an unhappy mistake, in education, that many parents, laying great stress upon their own speculations, are disposed to express great zeal early to instil them into the minds of their children. And, though some are wrong, and others unintelligible; yet they manifest a greater ardency and zeal to have these imparted, than principles that are of infinitely greater importance.

No child, at any age, should be taught that, which the person, who instructs, is not capable of giving clear ideas of. Such an attempt is intirely useless (especially in matters of religion) without having any idea, or notion, of what the words carry in them. As good never instruct at all, as not to teach them principles, which they can form an idea of.

If it be necessary (as undoubtedly it is) to have some principles, such as stand connected with action, we are to impart such principles; but to take care to do it, in proportion to their little understandings; and in the clearest manner. And never attempt to  
in-



SERM. instruct them in any part of a scheme  
X. which, perhaps, no one can understand.



It is of the greatest importance to teach them the difference of actions: *viz.* that there are some actions good, some evil; and some indifferent. You must express great care to recommend to them the practice of sincere piety and real virtue; in a way, that is most likely to convince their minds, and to make it evident that actions have very considerable consequences. And I cannot but apprehend that that is as easy a part of instruction as any.

As for *virtue*; we may teach them this, even in their very diversions. They know when they are injured by their play-fellows. And we may take advantage, from thence, to let them see that there is wrong and right. You may easily let them into a knowledge of the necessity of governing their appetites and passions. Perhaps, by indulging their appetites, or passions, some ill effects have already attended. From thence, it is fit to let them see that, if they would enjoy ease, they must take care not to be guilty of excess.

*Desire*

*Desire* and *fear* and *anger* are great affections, which you are to take great care of. If their desires are hardly to be restrained, it is very proper that they should be denied what they appear to be excessively fond of. It is highly proper that they sometimes should be disappointed, and that every inclination should not be indulged. Not that this should be very often; and much less constant: because that would turn into peevishness, which ought carefully to be warded off. SERM. X.

You may easily govern their inclinations, that are immoderate, if you will take care to begin early; and to let them see, that it is of importance, to govern those dispositions, which they find planted in their nature. When *anger* arises (a very unruly passion, as well as a passion that never fails of being attended with misery and distress) it must be corrected. But let them, also, see the consequences of frequent and inordinate inclinations; what influence they have upon their temper, and how they have a tendency to render them unhappy, and bereave them of their true comfort and enjoyment.

As

SERM. As to *fear* which is immoderate, you

X. may cure that, by directing them to the father of all Beings, who alone is to be feared: and, by raising in them one fear, that is superior to other instances, especially to that of an excessive fear of their fellow-creatures.

*Anger* and *desire* must be restrained. And children may be directed to this, by the consequences of those passions, in their society and conversation one with another. Strong desires will interfere. And, by these, they will be induced to complain, that such an one hindered their enjoyment of what they had a strong inclination to; and that it was done by one, perhaps, who was used to play with them. It is easy to represent, that, if they are liable to have their pleasures obstructed, they should take care that their desires are not too strong. When they are displeased with the behavior of others, they may be easily shown, that it is but reasonable to avoid giving the same uneasiness to others.

Thus you may see, that there is not such a difficulty, in finding out ways, that  
are

are proper to teach children the necessity of regulating their appetites and passions. SERM.  
X.

But farther: You may let them into a knowlege, that they are to govern their tongues. And I must here offer advice; which, I am affraid, will not be agreeable to one set of people in the world. They should use their children to silence. One mighty reason for the contrary, is, we are fond of having our children thought witty. But do not imagine, that it is always proper for children to talk, without knowing persons, and what is reasonable and fit for conversation. Some, by being accustomed to silence, are guarded against the vices of the tongue.

Let them take particular care not to be guilty of *lying*. Truth is the cement of society, the bond of community. It lays the foundation of mutual trust and confidence in one another. Therefore, you must early represent that speaking false is doing that which is exceeding mean and low; and exposes them to a just contempt. You must inform them, with great care, that *lying* arises from a meanness of spirit: that it is to cover some vice, or  
to



SERM. to avoid some fear. Truth is what they

X. expect from their play-fellows; and it will  
 always render them exceeding amiable, when they arrive to a more mature age. In the government of the tongue, there ought to be care taken to secure them from what is impure and profane. And words, that are indecent, are carefully to be avoided.

Again: you are to instruct them in the duties of truth and faithfulness, justice and goodness. You are to teach them, how low it is for any, when an affair is committed to his care, not to be found faithful. And you are to represent how unreasonable they would think it in their play-fellows. And let them know, that it is a rule, which it becomes every one to act by; viz. *to do to others as they would have others do to them.* There is no rule plainer than this; nor is there any rule that can be taught them sooner than this.

You must open to them the importance of *justice*. And, when they are grieved at any instance of the injustice of others to them, and complain to you, you should ever take the opportunity, then to instruct them

them in the nature of *justice*. And it is SERM.  
a very easy thing, to let them into the ob- X.  
ligation of doing what is right and just. 

You must teach them, also, good-will and benevolence. And, indeed, I must say this, in honor of human nature, that there is an early disposition of doing such offices of goodness, as they are capable of performing. It is very easy to represent this to them in such a light, as they may see it. “ You love to be used with goodness. “ You desire that others should do what “ gives you joy. Cannot you see, then, “ that you are to express this temper to “ others? ”

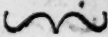
Nothing is more evident than that you may instruct children, in the duties which refer to GOD. It is easy to let them into the knowledge of the first, kind Being, the father of all; that they shall easily see, since they converse with you, that there is a common parent of all, who is kind and good; the giver of every thing which we enjoy. This may be easily understood. And, then, it will be no difficult task to ingraft, upon this, the duties that belong to GOD. “ You, Child, seem to express

SERM. " some kindness to me. Is it not highly

X. " fit that you should act the same part  
 " to our common father, by whose care  
 " and providence, you and I are preserv-  
 " ed? It is from him that I have a capa-  
 " city of doing you good. And, if you  
 " acknowlege my care to you ; is it not  
 " fit that you should express a grateful  
 " acknowledgement to that Being, who is  
 " the source of every thing?"

It is easy to represent that this Being is righteous and good ; and, of consequence, that it becomes them to endeavor to be like him, who is their heavenly father. Perhaps, it is not necessary, till their understandings are more enlarged, to open, in the fullest manner, such things, as are more difficult to be understood.

These are the things, which they, who have the care of children, are to impart, early, and with constancy. They are to carry their instructions farther, and to press these things upon them ; and let them see, that they are of importance. Tell them that there are annexed to every action, consequences ; to good actions, happiness ; to evil ones, misery. This is  
 the

the way, which God himself has taken. SERM:  
And we cannot do better, than imitate X.  
our heavenly father. When they do good,   
they feel happy fruits springing from  
thence; when their passions are irregular,  
or they do any thing injurious, or immo-  
ral, there will be, answerable to their ac-  
tions, some inconvenience arising. It is  
very easy for persons to impress upon  
them, the duties of piety, truth, justice,  
and goodness. It is easy, by an early  
education, to let them into the knowledge  
of the necessity of governing their appe-  
tites and passions.

This, therefore, is the way, which  
we are to take, to teach them the na-  
ture and importance of sincere piety and  
extensive virtue.

But then, we are farther, in our in-  
structions, to take the advantage of setting  
before children proper examples. *The wise  
beathens* assure us that this was one part of  
their education. We are to take care, in  
examples from history, to let them see  
that misery is the consequence of vice,  
and glory and excellence the consequences  
of distinguished virtue.



SERM. Such instructions are to be often incul-

X. cated upon the minds of young ones.

II. We may observe that there is another way, besides instruction, *viz.* by forming children, as their capacity appears, to the practice of piety and virtue.

We are sensible of the force of habits. It is not enough to teach them, but we must bring them to the practice of every thing that is good and excellent. We must early teach them goodness, by letting them impart something to persons in distress; directing them, at the same time, to the most proper objects. We may make them our almoners, in instances, where the objects are worthy. And, by these means, we may form them to the practice of beneficence. We are not only to instruct them; but to see to it that they practise agreeably; that so, by a course of actions, good habits may be formed and fixed in them.

III. You are to teach, or train up, children, in the way they should go, by your own good example.

It

It is not enough to give them precepts. SERM.  
You are to express such a reverence to X.  
*children*; as to shun, not only vice, but  
even indecencies, before them. When  
you pretend to instruct them, if they can  
see that you do not do so yourselves, your  
instructions will be of very little use. It  
may very justly be retorted upon you,  
“ Why do you expect that we should prac-  
tise what you run counter to?”

I need not here inlarge upon the influence of a good pattern, which has greater force than any precepts. He, who would have his children practise right, must make it manifest that he is convinced how much influence the bad example of a parent has. Example, in general, goes a great way. But, when it is the bad example of a parent, he loses his authority. A child will think, “ I am not to blame, “ if I only do as my father does:” and be ready to conclude, that he is fully justified, in every thing he does, that is of a like nature with the behavior of his instructor. We must take care, that our example is not only generally right, but that there be nothing indecent, or improper.

SERM. per. Particularly, we are to take care

X. neither to do, nor say, any thing, that is impure or unchaste, before young ones. Children are like tender plants, to be formed by us. We are, therefore, to take care, not only in general to exercise piety and virtue; but to do it in the most perfect manner; and, at all times, to be upon our guard.

IV. There is another way of training up of youth: and that is by *reproof*. And, if that will not do, by *correction*.

This is a most ungrateful task. *Reproof* is not very pleasing to any. And yet it is, in education, necessary. But then, we should take care to do it in the best way, and in the mildest manner; so as may be most proper to gain our end. For the design of education is the settling habits of piety and virtue. And, if nothing else will do, there must be added *correction*.

*Correction* refers to some crime. But it should not go one degree beyond proportion. The design of it being answered, it ought not to be carried farther. As little of this, in education, as possible, is the

the best way. But, rather than the habits SERM.  
of vice should settle, or fix, *reason* and X.  
*revelation* assure us, that there must be an  
higher and severer way taken.

I have done with the first part of the  
text, *Train up a child in the way he should*  
*go.* I now procede to the second part.  
*And, when he is old, he will not depart*  
*from it.*

Every one knows that *aphorisms* are to  
be understood, as generally true. It is  
enough to say, that this is the most pro-  
bable way, and that it is attended in ge-  
neral with success. And, where those  
habits are advanced, age will not fail to  
fix and strengthen them.

Now the reason of this is evident: be-  
cause, by such an early education, piety  
and virtue have the first possession. And  
every one may see the good influence, that,  
in consequence, must arise. Whatever we  
are taught early, makes very deep impres-  
sions, and prevents the contrary habits.  
And, consequently, it is no surprize, that  
they should not, when they advance in



SERM. years, depart from the way in which they  
 X. have been used to walk.

Custom is as second nature. Nothing is more strong than habits, contracted by many and repeated actions, and used for a long time. And we shall find persons, that are distinguished and remarkable for piety and virtue, have been generally among those, whose parents have taken early care of their education.

I should now have proceeded to make reflections, and recommend to parents, and those who have the instruction of youth, to train up children, with the utmost diligence and constancy, in the knowledge and practice of sincere piety and extensive virtue. But I shall not enter into this subject now. I intend to give instructions to parents, and set before them, motives, to engage in this useful work, with care and diligence. It is of great importance to their own happiness, and to the happiness of their children; to the preservation of society, and the welfare of public communities; to this world, and to the world to come.

It

It is easier to educate well, than it is to train up children in a wrong way. And I will venture to assert, that a wrong education is attended with more difficulty, and with less success. It is more difficult to throw into the minds of children, abstruse speculations and nice points of religion, which may never be determined, than principles which are of the greatest consequence.

It is, however, of the last importance to know, what is the best method of education. And what is the last thing in religion, is the first and easiest taught. The end of all religion is, sobriety, righteousness, godliness, or extensive virtue. And these are much easier taught, than those principles, which some zealous persons are so infinitely desirous of imprinting. If parents will but take the way, which God directs, they may do it with the greatest facility, and their labor will be attended with the greatest success.

It is better to educate well, than it is to

X.

train up children in the way of wisdom.

I will venture to affirm that a wrong edu-

cation is a greater evil than a wrong religion.

and with this I agree. It is more difficult

to throw out the weeds of error, than

to sow the seeds of truth.

And this is the reason why we should

be so careful in the choice of our

teachers.

It is, however, of the first importance

to know, that is the best method of

education, and what is the best thing

to be taught.

And of all religions, I believe, the

most rational and useful is that of

the Christian religion.

And this is the reason why we should

be so careful in the choice of our

teachers.

And this is the reason why we should

be so careful in the choice of our

teachers.

And this is the reason why we should

be so careful in the choice of our

teachers.



# S E R M O N XI.

On education.

The second sermon on this text



PROV. xxii. 6.

*Train up a child in the way he  
should go: and, when he is old,  
he will not depart from it.*



IN a former discourse upon <sup>SERM.</sup> these words, I told you there <sup>XI.</sup> are two parts considerable,

1. An exhortation. *Train  
up a child in the way he should go.*

2. The advantage, which arises from  
complying with that exhortation. *And,  
when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

We



SERM. We represented to you in what way a

XI. child is to be educated. He is to be trained up by instruction, imparted in a manner suitable to his capacity; by forming him to the practice of the plainest rules of piety and virtue; by a careful example; and by proposing such patterns to him, as may be proper to guard against what is prejudicial, and recommend what is of real advantage: Also, by gentle and kind reproofs: And, if they are not successful, by correction.

I now procede to give directions to those who have the care of training up of youth.

1. Take care to settle, in your own mind, the nature of that Being, the care of which is committed to you.

You are to educate a Being, that has understanding, and a power of action; which, in consequence, is accountable, and under moral government. This reasonable Being is gradually to grow up, and improve, in perfection and happiness. This conscious Being is united to a body, that has appetites and passions; such as are exactly suited to the state, in which he is placed.

placed. Remember that appetites and SERM. passions (by your own experience) are to XI. be governed; or the consequence of the contrary will be a defacing that power, which is to be the guide of action.

You are farther to consider, that, in this Being, there are placed principles, which may be of great advantage to you, in their education. They soon have a sense of honor, as well as shame. They appear to have a tender beneficence and ingenuity. They are sensible of favors. And there is something in them of compassion and pity, when they see objects of distress. And, as they are incapable of providing for themselves, they are easily sensible how fit it is to be under direction and government. These things are to be attended to, as advantages, in their education.

They should also form, in their own minds, a just estimate of the value of every thing, which refers to the child, committed to their care. Right sentiments are principles of right action. And a parent cannot expect that a child can act right, if he does not know what is right. *Pleasure,*

SERM. *sure, interest, and honor*, are things which

XI. affect all. We must, therefore, take care

to estimate these according to their true value. It is impossible that Beings, like men, should live without all views of their own happiness. But pleasures, that are sensible, are to be regulated. We are never to esteem them for their own sakes. Indeed, the mind cannot be always employed in what is the perfection of it. It must have some relaxation. But parents ought to know that pleasures of sense are only designed for a little unbending; but not proper to make an end. — As to *riches*, or the interest of life; — to expose them, as unworthy of any regard, would be really behaving in a manner quite unbecoming and unreasonable. However; we should fix it in our minds, that they are only *means* of making us happy; and become us, only as they are well used. If they are not well used, they prove thorns and a great unhappiness. — *Honor*, is to be esteemed, as it arises from virtue. But, I know not how it happens, it is often given to those, who have no merit: though that,

that, in the esteem of wise and good men, **SERM.**  
is the severest reflection. **XI.**

When we have settled the value of these things in our own minds, we shall be better able to instruct young folks. I would mark out the mistakes that arise for want of this knowledge. Very few consider that they are training up reasonable Beings. Who is there that tells a child, carefully and constantly, "that pleasure is to be refrained? You are not made for the pleasures of sense only. These are designed for recreations." Who tells a child that, though riches are means of making happy, they are far from being the chief good, or most essential to happiness? On the contrary, the greatest part of mankind hurry on, in an eager and restless pursuit of riches; as if their happiness was to arise from them alone? Certainly, then, this is of the utmost importance, always carefully to study, what that Being is, which we are to educate, and what will attend such pursuits. Nothing has more surprized me, than the conversation of some, for whom I really have an esteem, as men of virtue. How often will they  
say



SERM. say things, which discover they have not  
 XI. settled just sentiments in their own minds?

~~~~~ I think, I have sufficiently guarded what  
 I have said, by observing that there is no
 reason to condemn riches: only let us have
 just sentiments of them.

2. Let such as have the care of educating youth, carefully remember to educate and train them up for a fitness for him who created them.

GOD has given us instruction, by the beauty and order which are conspicuous in the world. He has imparted unto us life; set our duty in an easy view; opened it to us in such clearness, as is adapted to the low capacity, which (we find) we are placed in. He has connected true pleasure with the practice of real piety and extensive virtue. He has made every good to spring from a right temper and course of life; and every inconvenience from what is wrong. He has applied, not only to our reason; but to our hopes and fears; and to our ingenuity. We may easily see that he is willing to make us happy. If he corrects, he does it unwillingly. His design is always to raise us to the perfection and
 happy-

happinefs of our reasonable natures. By such a view, we fhall never fail of being led into the right method of training up a child.

SERM.
XI.

3. We are farther to confider the directions, which nature gives us.

Our ideas firft take their rife from fenfation; and afterwards we gain ideas by reflection. One of the beft rules for education, is, to follow the directions which nature gives. *That* teaches them what is of moft importance to their perfection and happinefs. Make your instructions *fenfible* to them. This will require a little attention; and yet, not more than any perfon may difcern the reason of. When you are to educate them, you are not to impart to them, at firft, the proof of a Deity, beyond their reason. You are to inform them, by the fenfible occurrences of their lives, the duties which arife from their reasonable make. Nothing can be more abfurd, than to impart to children what, perhaps, men of great capacities cannot form an idea of. Nothing is more abfurd, than to endeavor to let into their minds what they cannot attain any knowlege of.

VOL. IV.

R

You

SERM. You may teach them in common discourse.

XI.  Even in their play, there will be right and wrong. Good consequences will attend what is right, and there will be ill consequences arise from what is wrong. And you may make these things sensible to their little minds.

4. Consider carefully your soil: *that is*, the temper of those, whom you are to educate.

It is, I think, a wrong opinion, to say, "There are tempers in the world, which are from the very beginning stubborn, and incapable of being managed." I do not say that there may not be more ease in the education of some, than of others. But what I mean, is, that there is no temper, but what stands nearly allied to some virtue. In a word, the temper (or disposition) is only the soil. And he, that cultivates a plant, takes care to manage it so, as that it may have a proper soil; and due care be taken of it. Suppose any one has a passionate temper, that soon kindles, and is apt to lead into some actions which are not quite right. It is easy to see that this temper stands nearly allied to some virtue.

Let

Let the virtues, that are near, be practised by such; and guard them against the neighboring vices; and you make a right use of this temper. The passion of anger was placed in our make, for wise purposes (or we must reproach our Creator.) It is, no doubt, intended as an incentive to action. For take away all passion; and you will find the consequences very unhappy. Those, that are passionate, with great quickness of apprehension, see right or wrong. You may then direct this to very valuable purposes in life. You may lead them to see what is right and wrong, in the fullest and strongest way. And that is a great benefit. And, if they, by those passions, bring little distresses upon themselves? point out to them the reason of it. By these instructions, early and constantly inculcated upon them, and enforced by the consequences of their own passions; they will be early led to see why this passion is in their make, and that it is highly fit to govern it.

I know nothing worse to cultivate than an indolent temper. Such are, in consequence of their temper, disposed to mild-

SERM. nefs. You may take this advantage, when
 XI. they are young, to lead them into more
 distinct ideas of real piety and extensive
 goodness. But then, you must take care
 to cure the vice, that lies near to this dis-
 position. Tell them, it is mean for them
 to give up to indolence, and imagine that
 others should toil for them.

I am forced only to give general hints.
 But to procede to the tender passions,
 which are as well to be considered as the
 other. And, if these are not governed,
 the effects will be unhappy. Compassion
 (or pity) is placed in our make, in our
 creation; and for wise purposes; viz. that
 we may have a disposition to relieve the
 distressed. We are not to incourage chil-
 dren to any thing of cruelty. We are,
 however, to set before them that compas-
 sion and pity are not in themselves virtues.
 They are means, which God has been
 pleased to make use of, in order to bring
 us to virtue. We may, perhaps, pity,
 where there is not a proper object. We
 are, therefore, to represent that this tender
 passion is designed for very considerable pur-
 poses: yet it must be regulated. The end
 of

of having this tenderness placed in us, is, to
engage us to support and relieve such as are
in distress. And, when this end is answered,
all beyond that has less of perfection in it.

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Nothing is more evident and plain than that different methods of education must be taken, according to the different tempers and dispositions of those we are to educate. If they are rough, tender, silent, or modest; all these are carefully to be conducted and governed. When we see children discover modesty, this must be under some government; or it may degenerate into sheepishness and indisposition to action. And there must be great care to secure this temper from shunning every thing of action; or from not appearing with a proper firmness of mind. When they are put upon an action, never take their denial; but observe that they do it. You must watch their temper; and, if they are unwilling to appear before a person, insist upon it. Do not yield to them. Introduce them into company that is wise and good; and never take any excuse. By this way, in a little time, you will overcome this evil.

SERM. If you have to do with children retired within themselves, take care that you do not use any irregular conduct with such. They may have a little melancholy. You must not take notice of every thing that is wrong; but lead them insensibly into an easy conversation. And they will be pleased extremely; when you have got them out of that state, which gave them a little distress.

Always watch the first begining of what is wrong. And here, methinks, is a source of a great many unhappy effects of a wrong education. Parents and instructors will take a little care, in general; but they do not go into all particulars; or are not attentive, or constant, as they should be. Whenever you think that there is a disorder, remember to cure it, in its first rise. Oppose the beginnings of what is wrong, and root them out; but with all tenderness and affection.

Another advice, which I would give to parents and instructors of children, is, that they would encourage every thing, which is of advantage to their attaining of real piety and extensive virtue. If they disco-

ver

ver a briskness and application, take care SERM.
that you make the best use and improve- XI.
ment of these advantages, which offer
themselves. The God of nature has put
into your hands what is of real benefit.
It is easy to see that we are formed for
virtue; and that God, who recommends
virtue, has, in the course of his provi-
dence, given very considerable advantages
to those that have this task laid upon
them. Children have ingenuity. They
are, indeed, capable of being influenced
by fear. But do not work too much
with that passion, which will not bring
them to that ingenuous practice of virtue,
which is the last end of their education.
However, if you will work upon their
fear; open to them that there is a *Deity*,
who sees all their actions.

We have many principles, in our very
frame, which have an happy tendency to
virtue. And, if they are rightly improv-
ed, they will certainly be of considerable
advantage, in forming children to the sincere
practice of real virtue.

You should be diligent and constant;
and as uniform in your behavior, as you

SERM. can. Maintain your authority, and take
 XI. care that it be concealed ; or that it be al-
 ways gentle and mild. And let them see
 that your intention is for their happiness.
 A kind of distance, in a parent, will main-
 tain that respect, which cannot be support-
 ed by too great a degree of freedom. In
 order to be a pleasing authority, it should
 ever be attended with expressions of a sin-
 cere regard to their happiness. But the
 authority must be constant; and should
 lessen, in proportion to their increase in
 reason. Authority should take place,
 while children have little or no reason to
 direct their conduct. And, as they grow
 up, they are gradually to be taken into
 friendship. And, even then, there ought
 to be such a conduct, as to secure respect.
 This is a very difficult and nice part of
 education.

You are farther to add an attempt early
 to place youth to business. I knew not
 what loose sentiments this age has pro-
 duced. Some, who have the care of
 youth, think that all their happiness lies in
 indulging them. *Little master* must be
 denied nothing, that he desires, or craves
 after

after. Such is our make, that, if we cultivate the soil, it will produce very pleasing fruit: but, by neglecting it, it will bring nothing but briars and thorns, and every thing that is unhappy. We cannot arrive to any thing that will make us shine, and be a real ornament, without some toil. You should, therefore, fill up their time with some useful imployment, that may draw their natures to business and application. As they are reasonable Beings, you should stir them up to what is reasonable. And, by calling them to give a reason for every action, they will habitually grow up to the perfection of their reasonable nature. This ought to be a thing, which they should be directed to apply to, with great care.

Another advice, which I would give, is, that they, who have the care of children, would never suffer any thing to be proposed in conversation, that is wrong; without reminding them of it. Perhaps decency will not admit of it, in company; but they should be afterwards put in mind of it. For instance, if any should talk indecently before children, it is of importance

SERM. ance to correct those things; and to let

XI. children know, that such gentlemen have
 been mistaken. I am sure, this is of infinite advantage. And the true reason, why they, who behave so indecently, have not gained that government of their inclinations, as they ought, is commonly the want of such instructions in younger life. Children ought to be acquainted with the true principles of action, and with decency's being founded in the reason of things. They should often be taught the propriety and excellency of decent language and behavior, and the disagreeableness and deformity of the contrary.

Above all things, take great care that you teach them substantial piety, unaffected religion; and real, solid virtue. This is very fatally mistaken by some. They apprehend that they have apostolic doctrine; and that they train up children in the knowledge of the true faith. And, at the same time, neglect pure, simple, unaffected piety; and the practice of extensive virtue; only from a notion of what they call *right thinking*, and *the power of religion*. And they fail not of representing

ing their own sentiments as of great importance ; when, perhaps, they never were rightly examined by them. But the true design of education is, to bring youth to pure religion, and substantial virtue. We are not to place it in enthusiasm, or vain superstition, which has nothing solid in it ; but to give them such easy principles, as shall appear to arise out of the reason of things. And this is of very great importance. By this, you raise them to the perfection of their reasonable nature. By this, you bring them to their proper happiness.

You are to make it your great end, to lead them to the love of God, and others. These are the principles of religion, that will, with great clearness, conduce to the steady practice of virtue.

But you are not only to teach them virtue: you are to teach them an external, decent conduct and behavior.

Indeed, when some talk of *education*, they mean " that they can dance, and that " they know a little how to converse." They are to be commended. But it is a pity that such external decency does not
arise

SERM. arise from a nobler principle. And, if

XI.  this were carried to the utmost degree, we should find moral virtue to be of much greater extent, than the bulk of mankind imagines. Whatever is decent, or praiseworthy, ought to be kept in view, in our education. And the apostle *Paul* says, *Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, think of these things.* The reason, which teaches me the fitness of decency, teaches that it becomes me always, and in all circumstances.

I would conclude with recommending the practice of this duty, by proper motives.

1. Consider the advantages of a constant and diligent care of training up of youth.

It is impossible to educate wisely, without knowing the advantages thereof; and without knowing the temper and way of address. No one can perform this with judgment, but he must improve himself.

2. We see people infinitely fond of raising their children in the world. They take care of the situation, which they are
to

to be placed in ; what alliances they enter into ; and what riches or honor they can acquire. But what are these, compared to the training them up to a steady practice of piety and virtue ? There is infinitely greater pleasure and true enjoyment arising from virtue, than from all worldly riches and grandeur.

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3. Consider that no parent in life, but what is willing to leave his children an estate. Every one has it in his power of transmitting that, which is most valuable, to his children. If he forms them to real piety and substantial virtue, he gives them a larger share of happiness, than he can possibly give them, from any enjoyment in this world ; and complete happiness in another world.

4. Consider the inconveniencies, which will attend the neglect of a proper education. You are hereby the occasion of their unhappiness. You occasion evil to society. And you are liable to be called to an account; by the great judge of all. And then, what sad and melancholy reflections must arise in your minds ; when, instead of saying, " Behold I and the children, "
" which

SERM. " which thou hast given me, are before

XI. " thee ;" You shall be in the utmost confusion, fear, and dread ?

If, therefore, you would attain perfection and happiness, yourselves, in an higher degree ; if you would be happy in your own minds, and make your children happy ; you must rightly set about this work of training up the children, which God has, in his providence, committed to your care.





S E R M O N X I I .

The true design of Christianity.

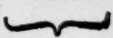


R O M. viii. 5, 6.

*For they, that are after the flesh,
do mind the things of the flesh :
but they, that are after the spi-
rit, the things of the spirit.*

*For to be carnally minded, is death;
but to be spiritually minded, is
life and peace.*



T. Paul, in this epistle, SERM. XII.
gives us a most comprehen-
sive view of all religion. 
The foundation is delivered
to us, Chap. i. 16. *For I
am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.*
There is a common figure made use of;
and

SERM. and more is implied than is expressed,

XII. “ I am so far from being ashamed of the
 “ gospel of Christ, that I glory in my be-
 “ ing an apostle, sent to preach it.” The
 reason follows; *For it is the power of God*
unto salvation, [It is the most effectual
mean to bring about complete happiness,
in the future world,] to every one that
believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the
Gentile.

Ver. 17. The apostle offers a reason for
 what he had before asserted; *For therein*
[i. e. in the dispensation of the gospel] is
the righteousness of God reveled, from faith
to faith. Or, as it might have been ren-
 dered, “ the righteousness of God, through
 “ faith, is reveled, to be imbraced and
 “ entertained by faith.” And this is con-
 firmed by the testimony of the prophets:
 As it is written; *The just shall live by faith.*
 This, the apostle proceeds farther to prove,
ver. 18. For the wrath of God [damnati-
on, or death] is reveled from heaven,
against all ungodliness, [i. e. atheism, ido-
latry, and superstition] and unrighteousness
of men, who hold the truth in unrighteous-
ness.

The

The apostle proceeds, then, to observe, SERM.
XII.
that the Gentiles, not retaining a right knowlege of God in their minds, forsook the worship of the one true God; and *turned the glory of God into the likeness of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.*

After he had evinced, that the Heathens, disregarding the light of nature, had given themselves up to courses of vice, he addresses, in the second chapter, to the Jew, and reproves him for judging the Gentiles, when he was guilty of violating the law of *Moses*, which he was under. The apostle, in that chapter, reproached the Jews, who pretended to be teachers of others; and, at the same time, infringed the laws, that were given to them, by the divine Being, through the ministry of *Moses*.

In the third chapter he obviates an objection, "Since the Jews, as well as the
" Gentiles are under condemnation; what
" advantage, then, hath the Jew? or
" what profit is there of circumcision?"

Why; there is a benefit arising from this: because unto the Jews the oracles of God were committed. And, if they did

SERM. not behave in a manner becoming their
 XII. peculiar privileges, the divine conduct was
 not to be blamed upon that score.

To pursue his view : he represents, since all, Jews as well as Gentiles, were become liable to condemnation, both were to be justified by free-favor, and the Jew had not the least color of reason to object against the bringing in of the Gentiles, on account of their idolatry, in regard that the Jews had incurred the divine displeasure, by violating the law of *Moses* ; and stood therefore, in equal necessity of being justified, or brought into the divine favor, upon the foot of grace, or mercy.

Chapter v. the apostle declares that the Gentiles, upon believing in Christ, were admitted to the divine favor ; and become the people of God ; as the Jews were, under the constitution of *Moses*.

Chapter vi. He shows that, since they were brought in by favor, they were to be influenced, by this goodness, to conform to the precepts of the Christian religion ; and that they had no just ground to infer, because grace had abounded to them, therefore they were to give a range
 to

to their irregular inclinations and appetites. SERM.
For such a behavior would be disagreeable XII.
to their being baptized into the Christian
institution: since, by their receiving the
doctrine of Christ, and professing it by bap-
tism, in so public a manner, they were
under the strictest obligations of being con-
formed to Christ, in his death, by dying
to sin; and to his resurrection, by rising
to newness of life.

Chapter vii. He represents the Jews as
now free from the obligation of the law of
Moses; That they were not to comply
with what *Moses* had recommended, with
an expectation, in consequence, of being
admitted into the divine favor, and the
hope of eternal life. And, putting himself
into the character of a *Jew*, he does, in
an elegant and lively manner, show, that
the law could not effect a recovery from the
power of sin, or restore them to an expect-
ation of eternal life.

Having settled these principles; — in
this viiith chapter he draws this inference,
There is, therefore, [that is, since the Jews
are not under the law, which threatened
death to every instance of disobedience,

SERM. there is now, under the institution of the
 XII. gospel,] *no Condemnation* [no sentence of
 death in force] against *those who are in*
Christ Jesus. But, in regard the apostle
 was apprehensive that the profession of the
 Christian religion was not enough to deno-
 minate the true disciples of Christ, he gives
 the character of them in the following
 clause, *Who walk, not after the flesh, but*
after the spirit. For the law of the spirit
 of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free
 from the law of sin and death. For what
 the law could not accomplish, in that it
 was weak, through the flesh, God [hath
 done, by] sending his own son, in the like-
 ness of sinful flesh; and, by a sacrifice for
 sin, condemned sin [to death] in the flesh:
 that is, in Christ, who was intirely free
 from every irregular inclination, when he
 was incarnate. And this was with a de-
 sign, that the righteousness of the law [or
 the moral part of it] might be performed
 by us; who walk, not after the flesh, but
 after the spirit.

The reason of what the apostle asserts,
 is given, in the words which we have
 read, *For they, that are after the flesh, do*
 mind

mind the things of the flesh; but they, that SERM.
are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. XII.
For to be carnally-minded, is death; but to
be spiritually-minded, is life and peace.

In these words, we have,

I. A description of the different characters of those, who profess the Christian religion.

II. The very different consequences, that will arise from the characters, which he had before represented.

We shall, under these two heads, endeavor to explain the words, and then make proper reflections.

The characters, we have, *ver. 5.* one is, *They, that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh.* The other is, *They, that are after the spirit, do mind the things of the spirit.*

As to the former. *They, that are after the flesh*—Some antient heretics (as they are called) apprehended that the *flesh* (meaning the body) was naturally evil in its appetites and passions. This was a very considerable mistake. And that it was so,

SERM. will appear, in regard that this would be a
 XII. reflection upon the creator and former of the
 body. Besides : if the body and its appetites
 and passions were naturally evil, there could
 be no vice, strictly speaking, by any exercise of the body, or of its members. For
 what is necessary cannot be avoided. And,
 of consequence, there cannot be any thing
 chargeable, of a moral nature. But, upon
 reflection, we shall find, there is no passion,
 appetite, or affection, placed in us,
 but for wise purposes, and tending to our
 benefit and happiness in this world.
 Therefore, *Chrysostom*, in an homily upon
 these words, tells us; that by *Flesh*, we
 are not to understand the frame or structure
 of the body, and the appetites and passions
 which may be found therein; but a
 luxurious exercise of pleasure, and the like.
 By which, we may easily see, that the
 apostle here, in this part of the character,
 intended such as have a view principally
 to gratify their sensual appetites and
 affections; even when they run to objects
 which are criminal; or when they are
 immoderate in the degree. Whoever is
 directed and governed by appetite and affection;

tion; and does not consider his reasonable make; and what becomes him to act, in that character; may fitly enough be said *to mind the things of the flesh.* SERM.
XII.

As we are formed, *Reason* is imparted to us, to give law to the lower powers, to direct and influence them. And, as we are capable of knowing that there is a God; and attaining some ideas of his perfections; and, of being influenced by them in our conduct; and, in consequence, are moral agents; we cannot but discern that we are designed to act agreeably to a moral character; in order to attain the perfection that is proper to our make, and the happiness which arises from it. Whoever, therefore, has all his fears and hopes terminating in a sensible world; who never reflects that he has powers capable of existing in a future world; and who hath not a due concern to cultivate and improve them, in the practice of virtue; such a one may come under the character of *being in the flesh, or minding the things of the flesh.* It is plain, in the sense of the apostle, that, by *the flesh*, we are to understand irregular appetites and criminal passi-

SERM. ons. When we so far indulge our desires
 XII. of sensual pleasures, as to transgress the
 laws which *reason* and *revelation* prescribe :
 when we are hurried away by passions,
 ungoverned and unreined : and, when we
 are by them led to a conduct, inconsistent
 with the happiness of others, whose hap-
 piness we are obliged, as reasonable Beings,
 to promote : we come under the character,
 which the apostle here gives, of *mind-
 ing the things of the flesh*.

Very frequently, the apostle represents
 sin as a person. And he calls it *a body of
 sin* ; and speaks of the members of this bo-
 dy, and enumerates several sins, *Col. iii. 5*.
 The word, which is rendered in our text,
do mind, stands to signify not only the
 exercise of the understanding, but it in-
 cludes an affection, bent, or propensity.
 So that the sense of the apostle, is, *They,
 who mind the things of the flesh* ; those, who
 have a relish for criminal pleasures, or injoy-
 ments ; who seem to make this world,
 their last design, and intent ; or, as the
 apostle expresses it, *Phil. iii. 19. who mind
 earthly things*, preferably to any prospect,
 or view of happiness, in another state : and
 who

who neglect attaining strict piety and virtue in this state, in order to arrive to the other. SERM.
XII.

This is the character given by the apostle, of those that are professors only of the dispensation of the gospel.

But there is a character, which the apostle gives in contrast, in the last clause; *They, that are after the spirit, do mind the things of the spirit.*

They, that are after the spirit: they, who are influenced by that doctrine of Christ, which is the effect of the illumination of the spirit; *they,* who have such a sense of this revelation, as to regard the views, which it recommends to us; and who engage in the practice of all the virtues, which the doctrine of Christ enjoins: In a word, *They,* who are true Christians, *that walk not after the flesh,* but after the dictates of that Doctrine which arises from the illumination of the spirit, imparted unto the apostles, from whom we have received this institution of revealed religion.

II. Let us consider the very different consequences, that will attend each of these characters.

To

SERM. *To be carnally minded is death: i. e.*

XII. tends to death, and will end in it. To
take a proper view of this, it will be necessary to have recourse to the first constitution of God, with respect to our first parents. God gave a prohibition, that they should not eat of the fruit of a certain tree. This may perhaps appear to be weak. But, upon a due attention, we shall easily see that it was the result of the wisdom of the creator. By this, there was a restraint laid upon the lower powers: and thereby our first parents were taught the necessity of preserving the proper empire and dominion of the mind over the sensible appetites and passions. This was a lesson extremely proper to give to our first parents, in their imbodyed state. By their intellectual natures, they were allied to the highest orders of intelligent Beings. But, as they were to converse with sense and sensible objects, they had proper appetites, whereby they were capable of being entertained by the objects of this sensible state. However; there was danger lest they should yield to appetite and passion, and suffer the lower powers to give law to their
their

their conduct. For that reason, GOD SERM.
wisely appointed that they should be re- XII.
strained. By that, instructing them, that
the lower faculties were to be directed and
governed by their reasonable nature. It
appears evident that it implied this. For
there was a threatning, that, if they in-
fringed this law, and suffered sense or ap-
petite to gain the ascendent over the mind,
they should *die*. There was a connection
between this and their crime. For, when
a reasonable nature is united to a body,
there is thereby a tendency to death. As
all things, that are sensible, shall have a
period. And the mind, being intirely
neglected, can have no capacity or fitness
for higher life.

On the other hand, *To be spiritually
minded is life and peace : i.e. life and hap-
piness.*

I cannot expers this with greater
strength, than the apostle *Peter* has done ;
and, therefore, I shall refer you to his
words, 1 *Peter* i. 23, &c. *Being borne
again* [that is, to a life of piety and virtue]
*not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,
viz. by the word of GOD, which liveth and
abideth*

SERM. *abideth for ever: i. e.* in its consequences

XII. and effects. For, when this produces a

rational, spiritual, and divine life, the effect, produced by the word of God, is the begining of eternal life. And it will

certainly have eternal life conferred as a reward. This the apostle sets in a yet

stronger light. *For all flesh is as grass;*

and all the glory of man as the flower of

grass. The grass withereth, and the flower

thereof falleth away: [All things sensible

decay; and the pleasures, arising from irregular appetites and passions, will die off.]

But the word of the Lord [forming the mind to a divine life] *indureth* [in its consequences]

for ever. And, that we may not be at a loss to know what he intended

by *the word of the Lord*, it follows, *And*

this is the word which, by the gospel, is

preached unto you.

You see, then, that the design of God, in placing of us in this state, wherein we are united to bodies, and conversant with sensible objects, is, that, by a right regulation of the lower powers, and the exercise of our intellectual ones, we might attain a likeness to God; and a life that is spiritual
and

and heavenly ; which shall never have an end, but shall remain for-ever, in complete happiness, in a future life. And this scheme of providence appears to be exactly consonant to the most perfect and consummate wisdom.

SERM.

XII.

We need not have recourse to a pre-existent state, to account for the appearances in this world. God has given us minds to govern the appetites, and to regulate the passions ; with a view thereby to bring us to virtue ; to a resemblance of himself in the moral perfections of his nature ; and, in consequence, that we might attain endless peace and happiness, in another life. This, then, is to be our confidence. This is to be our trial. We have appetites and passions fitted to converse with sensible objects. When these are kept in their proper order ; when reason holds the reins, directs, and governs them ; and, when the actions flow from the mind rightly instructed ; there is the temper of heaven ; there is the frame, necessary to make us meet for future glory. When our desires to the pleasures of sense, or to any thing in this world are immoderate ;
when

SERM. when they get the ascendent ; and we, in
 XII. our actions, follow the dictates of the lower powers ; we are in the way of *death*. And death will be the sentence, at last. On the contrary ; when truth and virtue prevail ; when all our lower faculties are under proper restraint ; and never allowed to carry us beyond real virtue ; then we arrive to the perfection, which our creator intended us for. And then we, in consequence, live and are happy. And, by revelation, we are taught to apprehend that this life and happiness shall be endless.

Thus I have laid before you the different characters, which the apostle gives, of such as profess the Christian religion, with their different consequences, *viz.* Those, that profess it, and yet chiefly relish and pursue sensible pleasures and enjoyments (whatever flattering hopes they may entertain in their minds, they) shall fall under *death*. On the other hand, Those, that live agreeably to the doctrines, which, by the spirit are imparted to us ; or according to the institution of Christ ; and who persevere therein unto the end ; they shall have *life* ; a divine and heavenly life,
 which

which shall never have an abatement, or a period. This is the view, which is given us by the apostle. SERM.
XII.

I now come to make reflections, and so conclude.

1. I would guard you against running into a mistake, in this argument. The apostle speaks to Christians: and, therefore, expresses himself in this manner, *They, that mind the things of the spirit.* Yet he discourses of *the mind*, elsewhere, as standing opposite to irregular appetites and passions: and he there talks of *the law of the mind*, and of *the law in the members*; and represents the imperfection of *the law of Moses*, and its inability to give a victory over *the law of the members*, when that had gained too great an ascendent. This was a very proper way to address to the *Roman* Christians (among whom there were Jewish converts) to lead them to see clearly, that the law was weak, through the prevalence of irregular appetites and passions; which could not be subdued, or conquered, by the motives, or encouragements, of the constitution of the law. But the apostle does not thereby intend to say, that

SERM. that those, who were only under the law

XII. of nature, or of reason, might not, in

some degree or measure, attain the principle of a spiritual life: and, of consequence, have a title, through mercy, to an heavenly reward. For this would be to contradict what is said elsewhere; *viz.* that GOD is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he, who feareth GOD and worketh righteousness, will be accepted of him. This is the strain and language of the New Testament, so that, when the apostle speaks of such as were *carnally-minded*; and of others, that were *spiritually-minded*; he uses phrases, that are proper to the *Christian religion*; not intending to exclude all, who were influenced by *reason*, to the practice of virtue. That was a case out of his present view.

2. We are to regard it as a privilege, that we are under a dispensation, which is the most perfect, in order to bring us to strict piety and real virtue.

It is the excellency of the *Christian religion*, that it is every way adapted to recover men from the practice of vice, and bring them to the highest and most sublime

sublime piety and virtue. And whoever takes the *Christian religion* in any other light, undoubtedly mistakes it. For the design of the gospel, is, that we may thereby be effectually taught *to deny all ungodliness* [idolatry and superstition,] *and worldly lusts* [sensuality, avarice, and pride,] *and that we may live soberly*, [in a wise regulation of our appetites and passions,] *righteously*, [in the exercise of justice and beneficence to others,] *and godly* [in a temper suitable to the character of the divine perfections.] This is the design, the ultimate design, of the Christian revelation. And the excellency of this institution, above the law of *Moses*, must be conspicuous, from this reflection. *The law was weak, through the flesh*. It had not encouragement enough to engage an ascendancy over the appetites and passions, when they had contracted strength. It opened, indeed, such motives as were exactly suited to its nature and genius. For the law was a civil polity; and designed, by the divine Being, to guard and secure the *Jews* from running into idolatry; and to awaken all the nations round about (which

SERM. were very much addicted to idolatry) to

XII. attend to the One true and living God.

Now, in this point of view, it was highly proper, that there should be temporal rewards, as well as temporal punishments. And I may venture to say, that there are no spiritual promises, of rewards in another state, by the Jewish polity. This, therefore, making that constitution feeble, and insufficient to recover men from vice to extensive virtue; the Christian religion appears, in a comparative view, to be much more excellent. For there is nothing wanting, in this institution, to give us a victory over the world, and over ourselves. There is nothing, but what is proper to raise us, as intelligent Beings, to that life, which is suitable to an intelligent nature. It opens to us the invisible world. It represents to us the duties of extensive holiness, in the clearest light. It shows us the consequence of holiness, on the one hand; and the dismal effects, that would arise from vice, on the other. This is strongly represented to us, in this epistle, Chap. vi. 22, 23. *But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have*

have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. On the contrary, says the apostle, *The wages of sin is death:—but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The religion of Christ opens to us, in a distinct manner, life and immortality. It has set before us even a sensible demonstration of future rewards; when Christ, who was raised from the dead, ascended to the Father, was placed at his right-hand, and possessed of the heavenly inheritance, as our forerunner. This religion gives us such discoveries of the Divine favor, as may ascertain the Divine readiness to impart to us all proper assistance and support, which the circumstances, that we are in, in this life, require. It has opened the doctrine of remission of sin, in the clearest manner. And yet, at the same time, has promised forgiveness, in such a method, as is agreeable to the most perfect moral character of God. *Repentance*, (i. e. a change of heart and life: not a mere sorrow for sin: not only confessing, but forsaking, every vice) is that term, upon which the forgiveness of sin is promised. We have, therefore, every thing,

SERM. as a motive and incouragement, which
 XII. our present state could require. This *re-*
velation is called *the spirit*; because it is
 from him that it took its rise. And it is
 the most effectual mean to bring us to a
 divine temper, which is proper and requi-
 site in order to make us meet for the glories
 of the unseen world. We have, there-
 fore, the highest reason to express our
 thankfulness to God, that he has favored
 us with this institution; which appears
 every way fit to effect and accomplish in
 us that moral righteousness, which is the
 perfection of a reasonable nature, and the
 foundation of its happiness.

3. We may see the wisdom of God,
 the great governor of all.

It is plain, that he has adapted one
 thing to another, with the nicest skill.
 If we live like sensible Beings, *Death* will
 insue. If we live like intelligent Beings,
 this will end in everlasting glory and hap-
 piness. So that we cannot but see the
 connection between strict piety and virtue,
 and final happiness. Now, in this, there
 is discovered the most perfect and unerring
 wisdom and skill.

4. This

4. This plainly shows, that merely professing the Christian religion will not avail to our happiness. If it be only professed, and we do not feel the influence of *this spirit*, i. e. this illumination, or doctrine, which is the result of the spirit; if we do not feel its effect and influence, in forming the complection of our souls, and regulating the whole course of our actions, it will not conduce to our being perfectly and for-ever happy.

SERM.

XII.

Even under the Christian religion, some are disposed to commute the matter with *Deity*. They would rather place their hopes in right thinking than in right living: and build upon this, as the foundation of happiness. They pretend to think right, even without erring; which they have no reason to suppose. But, if right thinking does not give them a right temper of mind, it will avail nothing to their future happiness and glory. The happiness of the other world must begin in real *piety* and *virtue* in this life. And our expectation may arise, proportionably as we are brought to an higher degree of perfection in the virtues, which the religion of

SERM. Christ enjoins. Therefore, let none of us
XII. flatter ourselves with hopes of being happy, by the grace of the gospel; if we are not brought to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this world. This is the end. Without this, all our principles, if they were true, would be insignificant to our being happy. Happiness does not arise from sentiments; it arises from a temper of mind; it springs from right actions; from all the duties, which the religion of our Savior recommends. It is the condescension of our heavenly Father, that he has not made faultless obedience the term of his favor; but that we are *sincere*. If our life flow from the principle of *the spirit*; (that is, of the light, which we have received from revelation) and bring us to a regard to all the precepts, which the doctrine of our Savior recommends; we, then, have just reason to hope, that to be thus *minded*, will be *life and peace*, in the end. And, indeed, any one may see that this is the scheme of the divine governor of the world. Has he not connected virtue and happiness in this world?

world? Is not this calculated to let us know it to be his design, that piety and virtue shall be finally happy? So that there is something of analogy, in his government, here; which may lead us to see there is just reason, in his revelation, to expect that there will be everlasting happiness conferred upon the virtuous, in a future state, as the reward of a virtuous conduct, at present.

5. How dangerous is it not to take the characters and marks, laid down in scripture? Or to have a respect to what may be only the invention of men?

When we examine our hopes of a better world, let us not readily fall in with what some have set before us. Some have imagined that, if we are careful to perform public worship, and commemorate the death of Christ; if we perform those external duties, with some air of devotion, and with constancy; then we have reason to hope that we shall be for-ever happy. This is not the character, laid down in *revelation*. We must look deeper; and consider what our affections tend to; what it is that we pursue. If the pleasures of

SERM. Christ enjoins. Therefore, let none of us
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T 4

sense,

SERM. sense, interest, and honor, to the neglect

XII. of real piety and extensive virtue, we undoubtedly deceive ourselves. It is not a bare profession; it is not using external means; though these ought not to be omitted. But we are to regard what is the effect of our complying with those means. Let us, therefore, carefully look into the foundation of our hopes of future glory. We have great reason to apprehend that there is another state, even by the light of nature. It is farther revealed to us, by Christ's institution. Surely, it is a matter of more importance than to be trifled with. What! if there should be another world, and an endless state? We may easily see, that this cannot be attained, without a temper suited to converse with heavenly things here, and made fit to receive them in another state. For otherwise, upon a supposition that we should be admitted to them, we should not relish any true satisfaction. Virtue is the only thing, that can make us capable of being happy in the Divine favor. The end of all *revelation* is to bring us *to be holy as God is holy*. This is the intent of religion, in general; and of the Christian religion

ligion, in particular. And, when once we come to live in *a divine manner*, that is, agreeably to our highest reason; when we are careful that no passion, or affection, shall gain such an ascendent, as to make disagreeable strict piety and extensive virtue; when we have attained this, we have a firm foundation to hope that we are in the favor of God: and that, when we are called to leave this world, we may be admitted into the joy of our Lord.

SERM.

XII.



system in practice. And, when once
 we have seen in a single instance that it
 is not in our light to be, which is
 the main point of the question, in relation to
 the fact of its being, we are to make our
 mind free, and extend the view; when
 we have seen that we have a right to
 know to know that we are the favored
 fact; and that, when we are called to
 leave the world, we may be admitted into
 the fold of life, and with it,





S E R M O N XIII.

The Ministry of John Baptist.



MATT. iii. 1, 2.

In those days, came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea; and saying, REPENT; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.



NOTHING (I think) is SERM. more plain, than that, by XIII. a right understanding of the history, which conveys to us the doctrine of *revelation*, we are led into a clear and distinct apprehension of the revelations, which God has favored men with.

We

SERM. We shall find, in the character and life
 XIII. of him who was to introduce the *Messiah*,
 such traces of wisdom and goodness, as
 will make it appear, that this dispensation
 was highly agreeable and proper, in order
 to prepare the way for the *Messiah*.

I. Let us consider the parents of *John the Baptist*, and the circumstances which attended his birth.

Zacharias, the father of *John the Baptist*, was one of the ordinary priests, and of the course of *Abia*. And, when it was his lot to go into the holy-place to offer incense (whether morning, or evening, is uncertain) on the north-side of the holy place, an angel appeared. This occasioned fear in him. For they had entertained a notion, that, when any such appearances were granted, they should soon after die.

For four hundred years, there had been a cessation of prophesy. And, during that period, nothing miraculous or extraordinary had been granted to the Jewish church. But; upon the approach of the *Messiah*, and when his forerunner was to be borne,

borne, all the extraordinary ways, by which GOD had before reveled himself to the Jewish nation, were revived. SERM.
XIII.

To scatter the fears, which sprung up in the mind of *Zacharias*, the angel declares his name *Gabriel*: represents his character, as standing in the presence of GOD, and assures him that he was sent upon a kind message, to let him know that his prayers were heard; and that his wife, *Elizabeth*, was to have a son, the forerunner of the *Messiah*. He, expressing diffidence, had a sign given him; but it was a sign that was attended with unhappy effects to him. For he was deaf and dumb. And this disorder was to last upon him, till the time of the accomplishment of what the angel had delivered to him.

The people were surprized that he stay'd so long in the temple. For, after a certain time, it was his office to come out, and bless the people. But, when he came, they discerned that he had seen a vision. For he could not speak. Upon his return home, he continued under this mark of the displeasure of GOD, for his unbelief.

But,

SERM. But, when the time came that *Elizabeth*.
 XIII. was to bring forth the forerunner of the
Messiah, there arose a contest, what name
 was to be given to him? *Elizabeth* (who
 was of the priestly line) said that his name
 was *John*. They, making signs to *Za-*
charias, to signify how he would have him
 called, he asked for a writing-table; and
 then wrote, saying, *His name is John*.
 This excited in them some wonder and
 surprize.

When he was borne, he was to be a
Nazarite. And his parents received a
 strict order, that nothing intoxicating
 should be given to him. The place of his
 abode was in the mountainous parts of
Judea. And, probably, the place, where
 he was borne, was *Hebron*. We have no-
 thing said of him, relating to his infancy.
 His dress, and way of living, and being a
Nazarite, are expressly mentioned by the
Evangelists. He continued in the desert,
 till the time came that he was to be shown
 to Israel: that is, at the time when (if he
 had been designed to be a priest) he should
 have been presented to the examination of
 the *Sanhedrim*, in one of the chambers of the
 temple.

temple. But, at that time, *the word of the Lord came unto him*: and he was to bear another, and a different, character. SERM. XIII.

II. Let us consider the office of *John the Baptist*; and the time, when he entered upon it.

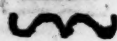
He is represented as *the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled up; and every high place shall be leveled*, that is, every thing, which was an hindrance to the spread of the doctrine of the *Messiah*, was to be removed by him.

His character was *the prophet of the most high*. And our Savior represents him as even greater than any of the prophets, who had preceded him. That is, all the prophets had honor, in proportion to the clearness of their representations of the *Messiah*, and the nearness of their living, to the time, when he should appear. *John*, being therefore a messenger, who was to introduce the *Messiah*, is represented, by our Lord, as greater than all the prophets that went before him.

His

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His office was to turn the hearts of many to the *Lord Jehovah*, or the *GOD of Israel*. He was to convert many unto that temper and behavior which might prepare them for a ready reception of the *Messiah's* kingdom.

There were, among the Jews, many sects, and many interpreters of the law; several heads, to whom they paid ready subjection. This occasioned very warm debates. And the anger and dislike, which were in their different schools, were brought into the families, to which they stood related. Therefore, *John* was to turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children; and the disobedient of the Jewish nation, to the practice of real prudence, and the wisdom of the just; *i. e.* of those, who were just, or righteous, by attaining a disposition and conduct that had a real excellency in them.

We find farther, that *John* was to come in the spirit and power of *Elias*. In one circumstance, he did not appear like that great prophet, who was attended with the power of working miracles. For it is expressly said of *John*, that, *he worked no miracles.*

miracles. It was not proper that he should; as it was suspected that he was the *Messiah*. If he had worked various and very remarkable miracles, it would have taken off the Jews from him, as a forerunner; and raised in them a suspicion that he was the true light, which was to come into the world.

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XIII.

One part of his office was to point out the *Messiah*, as just approaching. And, therefore, it was no way agreeable, that he should resemble *Elias* in the power of working miracles.

It is very evident (however) that *John* resembled him in the severity of his living, and unpoliteness of his dress. And he discovered the same ardent zeal for the practice of real piety and virtue. There was, also, the same resolution and courage in *John*, which appeared in *Elias*: so that he came in the power and spirit of *Elias*, on this account, faithfully executing his office as the forerunner of the *Messiah*.

III. We may take notice of the doctrine taught by *John the Baptist*.

VOL. IV.

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It

SERM. It was calculated to prepare the Jews
 XIII. for the reception of the *Messiah*. And he
 directly told them, "That there was one,
 " who would succede him, and was
 " near; who excelled him, who was be-
 " fore him, and prefered to him; and
 " whose shoes he was not worthy to un-
 " loose." That was a proverbial speech,
 to denote that he was so far above him,
 that he was not worthy of doing him the
 lowest office, even such as was expected
 from a servant to his Lord and Master.

When some were sent to know what
 his character was; *John* frankly owned
 that he was not the *Messiah*. And, when
 they asked him, "Why he did, then,
 " baptize?" He answered, that he did,
 indeed, baptize; but then it was only
with water, for the remission of sins.
 Whereas he, who should come after him,
 would baptize with the Holy Spirit, and
 with fire: that is, with the spirit, in the
 extraordinary gifts, conferred under the
 symbol of fire. And, when our Lord ap-
 peared to *John*, after he had been baptized
John points him out to his disciples, saying,
Behold,

of John Baptist.

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Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

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XIII.

You see then, *John* was a prophet; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, giving testimony to the true light, the *Messiah*; representing his kingdom to be near; and that he was before him, and greater than him; and that, though he did baptize with water, yet the *Messiah* would baptize with the spirit and with fire.

At first, *John* preached near the place where he was borne; in the cities and villages of what was called *the desert of Judea*. Afterwards, when numbers flocked to him, for the advantage of his baptism, he went to the river *Jordan*. He addressed to the people, of all ranks and orders, and of every sect and party; to the pharisees, and sadducees; to publicanes and soldiers. And he represented to them all the doctrine, which was calculated to prepare them for the appearing of the kingdom of the *Messiah*.

When such considerable numbers came to be baptized, the *Sanhedrim* was a little awakened; and thought it highly proper to send to know what character he did

SERM. bear. Their messengers were some *Priests*
 XIII. and *Levites*. And they asked him,

“ Whether he was the *Messiah*? ” He readily answered, *he was not*. They then put it to him again, “ Whether he was “ *Elias*? ” To which he answered, *I am not*. “ Or that prophet? ” And he answered, *No*.

Our Savior says, he was *Elias*. But, if we attend, we shall easily see, that there is no difficulty in reconciling the one with the other. For, when the *Sanhedrim* sent to him to know, whether he was *Elias*? It was in a sense different from that, in which our Savior says, he was *Elias*. They imagined that *Elias* would actually arise again from the dead, before the *Messiah* came. Now, he might very reasonably say, he was not *Elias*, in their meaning. For he was only the messenger, sent to prepare the way for the *Messiah*; and not the old prophet *Elias*, raised from the dead. They had a notion that an eminent prophet would arise, and therefore say, “ Art thou that prophet? ” Whether that refers to *the Prophet*, of which *Moses* speaks, *Deut. xviii. 15*. when he

he promises Israel, [*The Lord thy God* SERM. XIII. *will raise up unto thee a prophet :*] or that, before the *Messiah*, there should spring up such an one, some remarkable prophet. — The answer, which *John* gave, was, That *he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.* He plainly refers them unto what had a respect, in the prophesy, to him, as he was designed to introduce the *Messiah*.

When *John* was baptizing in *Jordan*, our Savior came and desired to be baptized by him. *John* represents this so, that there appears, at first, some difficulty, *John* i. 31, &c. *And I knew him not ; but, that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven, like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not. But he, that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.*

He was sent to give testimony to the *Messiah*. When he had this mission, it

SERM.

XIII.

was reveled to him, that, on whomsoever the spirit should descend, as a dove descends, that would be the person; and thereby he was to know him. When *Jesus* came to be baptized; before the spirit descended, it was reveled to *John*, that that was the person. And it therefore gave him some pain and uneasiness, that *Jesus* should desire to be baptized by him, who was only to bear testimony of him, as the true light. However, our Lord says, *Suffer this to be, For it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.* It is highly decent and proper that we, to whom the revelation of any dispensation is communicated, should comply with every divine appointment; and thereby express that honor which is due to whatever has a divine original.

Our Savior, indeed, had no sin. The doctrine, which *John* delivered, was *Repentance for the remission of sins.* And he baptized, as a confirmation of his doctrine. This in itself was not an institution that did at all agree to *the lamb of God*, who had no blemish; and who was designed to take away sin. However; it was highly agreeable that he, who had been circumcised,

cumeised, and thereby expressed that honor to the law, of which he was borne a subject, should also be baptized, as a confirmation of *John's* doctrine, *that the kingdom of heaven was at hand*. These things convinced *John*, and induced him to comply with what our Savior desired of him.

After this, we find our Savior was carried into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And, upon his return the next day, *John* seeing *Jesus*, says, *Behold the lamb of God*. We find him, also, giving his testimony, the day after; and before some of his disciples, who were influenced thereby to follow him.

When the forerunner of the *Messiah* had increased in the numbers of those, who attended his ministry, he went and baptized in a place that was under the government of *Philip*, the tetrarch of *Galilee*. This gave occasion, through the fame of *John*, to *Herod*, to send for him. And, when he came, he was treated with some marks of honor. *John* (suitable to his office) reproves him for having his brother's wife. And, if we consider the history transmitted to us, by *Josephus*, the crime will ap-

SERM. pear very aggravated. His brother, to
 XIII. whom the injury was done, was then alive.

~ The wife, which he had married before, was the daughter of *Aretas*, King of *Arabia*. The taking his brother's wife, occasioned his former wife to be rejected. And this caused very high resentments between her father and him, which had very unhappy consequences. *John*, as a prophet, sent to preach righteousness, shows an undaunted resolution and courage, by reproofing his conduct. But vice in power can hardly bear any such reproof. And therefore, we find that he was taken and put under confinement: but not under so great confinement, as to prevent his disciples from coming and hearing his discourses. For we find that he sent two of them, to know of *Jesus*, whether he was the *Messiah*; not to convince himself (For he had full evidence, by the divine afflatus and the descent of the Spirit upon him) but that he might let his disciples into the knowledge of the evidence, which attended *Jesus*, as the *Messiah* and Savior of the world.

I need go no farther, to finish this history, than to remark, That, to gratify the
 desire

desire of *Herodias's* daughter, messengers were sent to prison: and *John's* head was cut off. And (surprizing barbarity!) she presented it to her mother. This sacrifice of the *Baptist* was to gratify her for the pleasure which she gave *Herod*, in dancing, on his birth-day.

This is a summary view of the life of him who was to introduce the *Messiah*, so far as we have it delivered in the history of the gospel.

It will be now time, in a more particular manner, to consider *his doctrine*. — His character was a prophet, and one who was to bear testimony that the kingdom of the *Messiah* was at hand. And we find that he preached accordingly. This is expressed in a different way, in the other evangelists. He is said to come and *preach the doctrine of repentance for the remission of sins*. He is described as *baptizing*: and those, who were baptized by him, confessed their sins. This is the different way, in which his doctrine is represented to us.

The word *repentance*, in the *Greek*, stands to signify *a change of mind*: and so implies

SERM. implies in it the quitting of errors of judgment, and errors of practice; and a turning from them, to a contrary disposition and behavior. This doctrine is set in a fuller light, in what we have transmitted to us, of his preaching. He saw many *Pharisees* and *Sadducees* come to his baptism; and said, "O generation of vipers, you seem
 " to value yourselves for being the descen-
 " dents of *Abraham*: but you may be
 " more justly represented as the off-spring
 " of vipers. You allow yourselves in
 " every vice; only making a show of more
 " than ordinary piety. Who has warned
 " you to fly from the wrath to come? It
 " is certain, if you regarded such instruc-
 " tions, you would see that your external
 " righteousness would be of no manner of
 " avail. *Bring forth, therefore, fruits*
 " *meet for repentance.*" If they would
 comply with his doctrine, it was necessary
 not to lay any stress upon what was exter-
 nal and ritual; but upon real virtue, and
 the practice of those duties, which have an
 intrinsic excellency in them. This appears
 farther, by what follows. *Think not to*
say within yourselves, "We have Abraham
 " to

“to our father.” They laid down that as the great foundation of hope of favor with God, and of eternal happiness; that they descended from *Abraham*, and were under the covenant, by circumcision. They imagined that there was merit in both, to recommend them to the divine favor: and, therefore, it was of no very great consequence to them, to cultivate and improve moral righteousness. Now (says *John*) this is of no benefit. For God is able, of these stones, to raise up children unto *Abraham*. What led him, perhaps, to use this expression might be this. He was preaching, where the *Israelites* passed into the land of *Canaan*: and there was an heap of stones, laid to keep their passing over *Jordan*, in remembrance. He points to that heap, and says, “God can, even of these stones, raise up children unto *Abraham*.” Some farther think that, in this expression, *John* had a regard to the *Gentiles*, who, as idolators, or worshipers of stocks and stones, were unfit to be the children of God. But, whatever idolatry they had been guilty of, God was able to raise up chil-

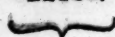
SERM. children unto *Abraham*, from the *Gentiles*,
 XIII. rather than to accept of such wicked *Jews*,
 and confer happiness upon them, who laid
 such stress upon what is of an external na-
 ture, and neglected real inward piety and
 holiness.

When *John* preached this doctrine of
repentance; [that is, the quitting wrong
 sentiments in religion, and irregular prac-
 tices; and exhorted them to lay aside those
 prejudices, which would prevent their re-
 ceiving the *Messiah's* doctrine; and to
 cultivate and improve real piety and vir-
 tue;—when he thus preached *repent-*
ance.] He represented to them that they
 must not flatter themselves with false
 hopes, in regard that they were the pro-
 fessed people of God. Now (says *John*)
the ax is laid to the root of the tree. And
every tree, which bringeth not forth good
fruit [that is, real piety and virtue] *shall*
be hewn down, and cast into the fire.

When the people asked *John*, what
 they should do? He puts them in mind
 that, if they had two coats, they should
 give one to him that wanted. When the
 pub-

publicanes asked, what they should do? SERM.
He taught them that they should not take XIII.
more than their due, by any act of ex-
tortion. And, when the soldiers came to
him, and asked him, what they should
do? He taught them not to use violence,
[or take from the people by plunder] nor
to oppress the people by false informations;
but to be content with their wages.

You see, then, what *John* meant, when
he recommended *repentance*; viz. that every
immoral practice must be abandoned; and
that there must be a pursuit of acts of mo-
ral righteousness, which have an intrinsic
excellency in them. His design was to
take them off from wrong sentiments; to
dissuade them from placing their hopes in
external rites; and to teach them, that it
was a matter of the last importance to quit
every sin, and to ingage in the practice of
every virtue. This was attended with a
promise of pardon. And I must confess that
I do not find any where so clear a promise
of the forgiveness of sin, before the preach-
ing of *John the Baptist*. I do not say, that
the patriarchs had not pardon and accept-
ance;

SERM. XIII.  ance; but I do not find that there was any express promise given, of the pardon of sin. When *the Law* was set up, the people of *Israel* were then considered as a policy. And the prophets were sent to call them to repentance; with a promise that their temporal evils should be removed, and that they should have temporal blessings. But the doctrine of *John* assured them that, upon quitting every immorality, and engaging in the practice of all moral righteousness, they should obtain pardon. It is, therefore, called *the beginning of the gospel*, or of glad tidings. And those glad tidings were not opened by any, in such a clear manner, as they were by the doctrine of *John*, till the Messiah preached them, in a yet fuller and clearer manner.

I would farther observe, that they, who came to *John the Baptist*, after they had confessed their sins, did openly declare their resolution to forsake every sin; and to engage, in their future conduct, in the practice of every virtue. *Baptism* was practised before this (not only as a way,

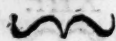
way, by which, under *the law*, they, who had contracted defilement, were purified, and had their pollution washed away; but, also) as the rite of initiating proselytes. Whence this took its rise, is not capable of a determination. Some suppose from *Jacob's* ordering all his servants to put away their *strange Gods*, and to be clean, or wash themselves, *Gen. xxxv. 2.* Some suppose it took its rise from the command of God by *Moses*, *Exod. xix. 10.* But I think that it is uncertain whence it took its rise. However; it appears very plain that it was a rite, by which the *Jews* introduced a *Gentile* into the profession of *the law of Moses*, and into the expectation of the privileges of that institution. *Baptism* was performed by *John*, as a confirmation of the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins. And it was an intimation that the *Jews* were to be proselyted into the kingdom of the *Messiah*.

Having thus opened to you the doctrine, which *John* preached, with as much clearness and compass as the history will admit of; give me leave,

IV. To

SERM.

XIII.



IV. To consider the argument, by which he presses it, *For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

I must explain this: and, then, show you the force of the argument.

I need not tell you, that, by *the kingdom of heaven*, is meant *the kingdom of God*; or that it stands to express something of *Deity*. But, by *the kingdom of heaven*, or of *God*, we are to understand *the kingdom of the Messiah*, or the doctrine of the gospel. And I would farther take notice, that this is borrowed from *Dan. ii. 44. and vii. 13, 14.* where there is a prediction of *a kingdom*, which should succeede the four great monarchies, and that should have no end. And *Dan. ix. 24.* it is represented, with great clearness, that, when the *Messiah* should come and set up this kingdom, he would *bring in everlasting righteousness*; a righteousness, that is of eternal and immutable obligation.

Under *the law of Moses*, they had many institutions, which did not make perfect those who observed them. But the
Messiah's

Messiah's kingdom consists in righteousness and peace and joy in the holy spirit. It SERM. XIII.

is, therefore, with great propriety, stiled *the kingdom of God*; not only as it came from God; but as it is made up of laws, the observance of which will bring those, that are the disciples of it, to a resemblance of God, in universal righteousness and goodness.

For the end of this institution, is, to attemper us for heaven, and make us meet for eternal happiness and glory.

We may then, with great ease, see where the force of the argument lies.

REPENT; that is, if you indulge yourselves in any known course of vice, forsake it; and enter upon a course of piety and virtue. *For the kingdom of the Messiah is at hand.*

It is just going to be set up. And, under that constitution, it will be of no avail to observe externals and rituals. Your saying that you are the children of *Abraham*, will avail nothing. For his kingdom will be a kingdom coming from God, and designed to bring you to a divine temper and a good life; to be conformed to precepts, which are in

SERM. their own nature excellent and immutable.

XIII. Therefore, *repent*. This is the properest way to prepare you for the reception of the approaching kingdom of the *Messiah*.

V. I would conclude this whole discourse upon *John*, with observing the traces of wisdom and goodness, which are conspicuous in the whole institution.

It was highly proper that the *Messiah* should be introduced by an harbinger, who should prepare the way before him. *Malachi* had prophesied of such a one. And *John* came, and fulfilled the prediction. It was very proper that *John* should descend from *Zacharias*, a person of a public character; and that he should be officiating, in the temple, when the angel appeared, and declared that he should have a son; — that he should for his unbelief, be struck dumb; and continue under that affliction, 'till the time came that this son was borne. These circumstances made the fact more notorious, and more attended to.

Dan. ix. 21, &c. The angel *Gabriel* had brought to *Daniel*, the prophet, the prediction

prediction of the time of the coming of the *Messiah*. When, therefore, the same angel came again, it tended to make the *Jews* reflect, and consider the antient prophesy, and conclude that his kingdom was speedily approaching: especially as they were daily in expectation of the approach of that kingdom. SERM.
XIII.

It was highly proper that his parents should have so excellent a character, as that of *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless*. For that must give great credit to their testimony.

His name [*John*] which denotes *the grace* (or favor) of God, was highly proper; when God was about to open the riches of his grace (or favor) by the *Messiah*, whose messenger he was. It was fit that he should be educated in the wilderness of *Judea*, far from the academy and the court, that it might appear that he had his knowledge from the spirit of prophesie, and was to introduce a spiritual kingdom. It was proper that he should live in a plain and austere way; and that his manner of conduct should be just what

SERM. the old prophets made use of. For he
 XIII. was to introduce the *Messiah*, whose kingdom was not of this world. Therefore, the fore-runner appears no more in pomp, than he himself: which was enough to confute that general opinion of the *Jews*, that the *Messiah* was to erect a temporal kingdom.

At the time, when *John* was sent to bear this office, the *Jews* were sunk into a prevailing regard to what was external and ritual; and neglected that righteousness, which was to be introduced, by the *Messiah*, in his kingdom. They had a notion that they should be happy, as they were the descendents of *Abraham*. Now, what could be more proper, than to send a messenger to remove those prejudices, before the *Messiah* should come? This was a message of wise goodness. For, when real virtue was enjoined, as necessary to pardon: that would take them off from all false dependences, and lead them to see that, as it was foretold that the *Messiah* would introduce everlasting righteousness, nothing could render them acceptable to the *Messiah*, but a real change of heart
 and

and life, or a sincere and steady pursuit of true piety and holiness. SERM.
XIII.

We may farther see that the doctrine, which *John the baptist* delivered, was highly fit to take them off from expecting justification and favor, from *the law*. The language of that constitution, was, *Do this and live: but cursed is every one, who continueth not in every thing, which is commanded in the law*. Now the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins, is; If you are sincere, in receiving the *Messiah*; and are influenced to forsake every sin, and to ingage in the practice of real piety and virtue; you shall have pardon. It is not upon a faultless obedience. But, such is the divine favor, that repentance and forgiveness are now connected. If you will put off the old man, and put on the new; quit all past sins, and ingage in the pursuit of real piety and virtue, you shall have forgiveness of sins.

Thus you see how the introduction of the *Messiah's* kingdom was calculated to enter men into a pursuit, which, if steadily followed, would prepare their minds to see the great views of *the son of God*,

SERM. in coming into the world. And, when,
 XIII. in the course of his life, he was ready to
 seal the truth of his mission, by a brave
 and patient submission to death (in consequence of the faithful exercise of his character, as one sent of God to prepare the way for the approaching kingdom of the *Messiah*) there was a full confirmation, that the word of the Lord had come unto him, and that what he delivered, was the doctrine, which he received from God.

If we make such reflections, we shall read the history of *John the baptist* with the greatest pleasure: and see how, in his dress and way of living, and in all his character and conduct, there was a great discovery of the divine wisdom, as he was intended to be the fore-runner of the *Messiah*. It was proper to let the *Jews* know that their notion of a temporal kingdom was ill-grounded: and to direct them to universal righteousness and goodness. And that was strongly pressed, by the approach of the kingdom of the *Messiah*; which was to consist in *righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy spirit.*

To

To conclude: Let me caution you not to lay the foundation of your hope in externals; but in real piety and extensive holiness. There is nothing more fatal, than to form our hopes of happiness upon any thing short of a divine temper and a good life. Upon these alone our meetness for heaven depends. And we can never, without self-flattery, form any expectation of happiness, unless we are brought to a love of God, *others*, and *ourselves*; upon which all our duties depend. Let us not, therefore, rest in any thing that is external. But let us consider what is the complection of the mind?
“ Is my main end to please God, by endeavouring to resemble him? Or have I recourse to some external expression of veneration of him, and indulge what is contrary to him? ”

We have the highest grounds to entertain and value the Christian religion, that has opened to our view the pardon of sin, upon repentance, with a clearness and fulness, with which the light of nature could never have discovered it. When we have offended, we become obnoxious

SERM. to the governor of the world. And I
 XIII. cannot forbear taking notice what wrong
 sentiments some writers have, when they
 speak of God's pardoning men, as the
 effect of righteousness, which is the ef-
 fect of favor. Surely; it must be the
 effect of free-goodness. *Pardon* implies
 a removing the penalty, annexed to vio-
 lating a law, which is *death*. And is not
 this a matter of favor?

Above all things, let us cultivate the
 love of God and *others*. These arise from
 our *intelligent frame*, and are represented,
 as necessary, to make us meet for the re-
 ward, which Christianity sets before us.
 What color of reason have any to object
 against the dispensation of the gospel?
 Its precepts are excellent; proper to re-
 fine and exalt our powers, and impart
 happiness to us in this world. The ex-
 ample, which it sets before us, is perfect.
 The encouragements and rewards are wor-
 thy of God, and suited to our state. The
 pardon of sin, and a resurrection to end-
 less happiness and glory, is certain. Let
 us, therefore, be induced, by these confi-
 derations, to adhere firmly to this *revela-*
tion

tion; and to be influenced by it, in our temper and life. It is of no service to profess this religion, if it has not an effect upon our temper and behavior. Let us live as children of the light. Let us walk worthy of the Christian doctrine; and have, in consequence of it, inward joy and a well-grounded hope, that, when our Savior returns as judge, we shall receive from his hand a crown of righteousness and joy, which will never be taken from us.

SERM.
XIII.



S E R-



S E R M O N XIV.

A paraphrase on Christ's sermon
upon the mount.



MATT. V. 1, 2.

*And, seeing the multitudes, he
went up into a mountain. And
when he was set, his disciples
came unto him.*

*And he opened his mouth, and
taught them, saying.*



THE time, when our Lord SERM.
taught his disciples, this ad- XIV.
mirable sermon on the mount, }
was in the second year of his
ministry. Whether there was a plain on
the mount, and this sermon delivered
there, is not worth debating.

When

SERM. When our Lord delivered this discourse,
XIV. he had attained considerable influence.

John, his fore-runner, had witnessed to him, that he was the *Messiah*. And many, from this persuasion, became his disciples. And, from all parts, in considerable crouds, they had recourse to him. Though he did not, at present, act agreeably to their expectation; yet they hoped that, when circumstances would favor, he would appear as their *Messiah*. They had entertained sentiments that the *Messiah* would set up a temporal kingdom; that he would conquer all nations; and render them subject to the power and dominion of such of the *Jews* as would entertain him, as the person foretold by *Moses* and the prophets.

And Jesus, *seeing the multitudes*, [looking upon them, and knowing their wrong sentiments, and bad dispositions,] *he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying.*

I design, in this discourse, to give you a *paraphrase* of this whole sermon on the mount; to show you the connection between its several parts; and then make reflections.

I have

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 317

I have already represented to you the SERM.
esteem, which *Jesus* had, at this time, XIV.
with the people; and the expectation,
which they had from him. Our Savi-
or intended, in this sermon, to correct
their false opinions; and to cure those dis-
positions in them, that were inconsistent
with the laws of that kingdom, which
he was sent, from the father, to set up.
*Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's
is the kingdom of heaven.* I am sensible
that you entertain opinions of a temporal
kingdom. You have strong affections to
riches, and grandeur, and conquest. You
imagine that these are the proper quali-
fications of those who profess their regards
to the *Messiah*. But, if you would at-
tain dispositions proper for my disciples,
you must not have a worldly temper;
but be contented, in the state, in which
providence has placed you. If you are
rich, you must improve those riches, in
the exercise of beneficence and goodness.
If poor, you must be contented with it.
For my kingdom is not of this world.
And, those, who are proper members of
it, are *poor in spirit*.

As

SERM. As you expect the *Messiah* to set up a

XIV. temporal kingdom, you phanſy that gaiety

and ſpritelineſs, mirth and pleaſure, become the members of the *Messiah's* kingdom. On the contrary, I pronounce thoſe happy, who are grave and ſerious; that, with grief and concern of mind, reflect upon their irregular courſe of actions, and repent and amend. They are the perſons, who ſhall be admitted into my kingdom; and receive that comfort, which is proper and ſuitable to their character and condition.

As you imagine that God will ſet up a temporal kingdom under the *Messiah*, you phanſy that great reſolution and bravery of ſpirit, an heroic temper of mind, is a very proper character and qualification for the diſciples of the *Messiah*. On the contrary, I aſſure you, the merciful, the mild, the humble, and gentle, temper, is that, which will qualify you to become ſubjects of the *Messiah's* kingdom: and that, agreeably to your own writers, *Bleſſed are the meek; for they ſhall inherit the earth.*

From

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 319

From a view of having all other na-
tions subdued to you, under *Messiah*, the
king; you phanſy that you ſhall be allow-
ed to break in upon the laws of juſtice
and righteouſneſs; and that this will be
diſpenſed with. Whereas the true diſci-
ples of the *Messiah* are to have *hungering*
and thirſting (not after power and domi-
nion, not after conqueſts and riches, but)
after righteouſneſs; and will not do any
thing contrary to what is juſt and right.
My diſciples muſt not expect to be re-
ceived into my kingdom, by invading the
rights of others, or gaining a conqueſt
over them; but thoſe that hunger and
thirſt after righteouſneſs, they ſhall be ſa-
tiſfied, and meet with ſucceſs. Whereas,
in conquering other nations, you ſhall not
be attended with any ſucceſs.

Since you ſuppoſe that the *Messiah's*
kingdom is deſigned to be temporal, you
may phanſy that you are not to ſhow any
tenderneſs to thoſe, who do not readily
ſubject all, that they have, to the king,
Messiah; who (as you think) is to ſubdue
all nations. On the contrary, I pro-
nounce bleſſed, thoſe that are merciful,
who

SERM.
XIV.

SERM. who are so far from acting what has the
 XIV. least air of cruelty, in subjecting men to
 a temporal dominion, that they have a
 great regard to all, who are in any circumstance of distress.

As you expect a temporal kingdom, you imagine, that, when you have conquered other nations, you may gratify your lusts, upon all the captives, whom you may take. But my disciples are *pure in heart*. I do expect that they should not only avoid outward instances of impurity; but that they should have their inward desires under proper regulation and government. And such may justly expect to enjoy perfect happiness from God.

You imagine that the *Messiah* will set up a temporal kingdom: and that a fierce and furious temper is agreeable. But therein you are mistaken, such dispositions are quite improper for my disciples. I regard those that are peace-makers; who cultivate a love of peace, and are willing to promote peace among all men. This is the character, which I expect, in my disciples.

You

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 321

You may flatter yourselves that, when SERM.
the *Messiah* sets up his kingdom, you XIV.
shall have all serenity and temporal enjoy-
ments. Whereas my disciples will meet
with crosses and ill-usage from others.
But do not apprehend that you are less
happy, in consequence of these sufferings.
You have the greatest reason to rejoice
and to be exceeding glad. For I give you a
prospect of another world. Great is your
reward (not here on earth, as you flatter
yourselves; but) in heaven. And you
have no reason to be dissatisfied with it;
because all the Prophets, in the old testa-
ment times, have been persecuted. I do
not intend that you should be remarkably
pious and virtuous; and not be patterns
to others. *Ye are the salt of the earth.*
You are designed, by me, to be advanced
to such a remarkable purity, as to be ex-
emplary to all the world. And you know
very well, that, if the salt has lost its
favor, it is good for nothing; but to be
cast out, and troden under the feet of
men.

If, under my institution, you prove
useless, and not exemplary in purity of

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life,

SERM. life, you act quite the reverse to my intention. You are to be *the light of the*

XIV. *world.* And it is my view, that you should not appear pious and virtuous, to attain the applause of men; but that you may (by being patterns of piety and virtue) be serviceable to others, with whom you converse. *You are the light of the world. A city, set on an hill, cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house.* As men design, when they build a city upon an hill, that it should be conspicuous; and when they set up a light, that it should be serviceable and beneficial to others, my design, in teaching you a pure doctrine and manner of life, is, that you may be conspicuous, and a light and benefit to the world around you.

You may perhaps imagine that the *Messiah* cannot set up a temporal kingdom, or attain universal conquest, without violating some moral law; and, therefore, that the design of the *Messiah* will be to supersede the obligation of those moral laws, that his kingdom might be
set

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 323

set up. But *think not that I am come to* SERM.
destroy the law and the prophets ; but rather XIV.
to carry them to a greater perfection. For
I can assure you, that sooner may the
frame of this world be dissolved, than
the obligation of what is moral be relaxed.
And whoever shall break any of these mor-
al obligations, and teach men so, shall
not be my disciple here, or have any
ground to expect happiness hereafter. But
whosoever shall do, and teach them, he
shall be esteemed my disciple ; and shall,
at last, attain an high degree of glory, in
a future world. And, *unless your righte-*
ousness exceeds the righteousness of the
Scribes and Pharisees, who are your teach-
ers, you shall, in no case, be my disciples,
here or hereafter.

And here I must let you know how
your teachers have misinterpreted the
law. *You have heard that it was said*
unto them of old time, " Thou shalt not
" kill." And, whosoever shall kill, shall
be in danger of the judgment. Your teach-
ers have told you that you never violate
the laws of God, unless you act quite
contrary to the very letter of them : and

SERM. that no one is guilty of *murther* ; unless
 XIV. he has taken away the life of another.

~ And, if he has done this, he is in danger of the judgment, of the civil power set up in every city. And the penalty of that crime is cutting off the life, by the sword. But I intend to carry this command to a greater perfection. And, therefore, I say, that *whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say unto his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council* : i. e. whosoever shall not only allow malice in his heart, but suffer it to appear in opprobrious expressions, *shall be in danger of the council* ; or of the punishment of an higher judicature, than that, which had a power of inflicting death, by cutting off the head with a sword. — *And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the punishment, answering to that of burning in the valley of Hinnom.* Therefore, do not apprehend that, if you indulge yourselves in malice, you shall be accepted of God. No, *if thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there remembreth that thy brother*

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 325

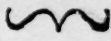
brother has aught against thee ; leave there SERM.
thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; XIV.
first be reconciled to thy brother ; and then
come, and offer thy gift. Do not flatter
yourselves with the hopes that external
ceremonies will avail any thing, if you
have not the temper of love to others.
Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilest
thou art in the way with him ; lest, at any
time, the adversary deliver thee to the judge,
and the judge deliver thee to the officer,
and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say
unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out
thence, 'till thou hast paid the uttermost far-
thing. Take care not to delay to be re-
conciled to your brother ; any more than
you should delay a person that asked of
you the payment of a due debt ; or neg-
lect it, till the officer arrest you, and you
are cast into prison. Such a conduct, in
regard of what I now recommend to you,
is surely very proper. Verily I say, You
shall not, when it comes to the decision
of the judge, come out from that con-
finement in prison, till you have paid the
uttermost farthing.

SERM. Another instance, wherein the scribes

XIV. and pharisees misinterpret the law, is,

Thou shalt not commit adultery. They never tell you that any inordinate affection renders you guilty. But be assured that I come to carry these precepts to a greater perfection. *I say that whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, and would pursue that desire, if he had an opportunity, committeth adultery in his heart.* And do not imagine that it is of no consequence to root out these inordinate affections. For I tell you that, *if your right eye offend you, you must pluck it out, and cast it from you. Because it is profitable for you, that one of your members should perish, rather than your whole body should be cast into hell. And, if your right hand offend you, cut it off, and cast it from you. For it is profitable for you, that one of your members should perish; rather than your whole body should be cast into hell.* It is better to cut off a gangrened member, and to save the body; than it is to save that member, and lose the whole. Root out those inordinate affections; rather than, by indulging of them,

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 327

them, to expose your own soul to an SERM.
everlasting destruction from the presence XIV.
of the Lord. 

And here I must remind you of some very wrong sentiments. They have told you that you may put away your wife, provided you give her a writing of divorcement. This will favor irregular affections. And, therefore, I say that, since you ingage one with another to be faithful; unless there arises something which dissolves that bond of union, you are not to put away your wife. There can be no sufficient reason for it, except that which destroys the first compact, that is *adultery*.

Another instance, wherein I would have you excede the righteousness of your teachers, is, concerning swearing. You have heard that it hath been said to them of old time, *Thou shalt not forswear thyself; but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths*. And you have been allowed, in other instances, to use oaths; and especially where there is no immediate reference to God. Now my design, says our savior, is, that you should not swear

SERM. at all, in common conversation. And,
XIV. though you pretend to excuse these oaths;
either they have some reference to God,
or none. If they have some reference to
God, then that is to be guarded against.
If you swear by heaven, it is God's
throne; or by the earth, it is his foot-
stool. And, if you make use of oaths
which have no reference to God, that is
certainly very trifling. And you ought to
guard against those oaths. Swearing by
the head, is really rash. For you cannot
make one hair white or black. And why
should you use an oath, in a manner
quite contrary to the design of an oath;
which is to appeal to God, who, if it
be false, is able to avenge it? I tell you,
that you are not, in your common con-
versation, to have any other method of
expressing your sentiments, than *yea, yea;*
nay, nay. For, whatever pretence you
may have to support your swearing, it
will, if carefully regarded, be evident,
that it springs from evil. If you use oaths
upon every trifle, you will introduce an
habit of very little regarding what is of
great

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great moment, viz. a due veneration for the name of GOD. SERM.
XIV.

You have heard that it hath been said, *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*; but I say unto you, *resist not evil*. I design to carry moral virtue to an higher perfection. And, therefore, recommend it to you *that you resist not evil*; that you have not a disposition to revenge; but I would advise you to bear lesser injuries, rather than by them to be induced to seek an exact return of evil to those who have offended you. Nay, I will go so far as to say that, *if they should compel you to go a Mile, go with them two*. You are to be so far from having a desire of revenge, that you must rather yield to many little injuries; for instance, to give to them that ask you, though they have acted unjustly towards you. And do not turn away from them, when they petition you for any good.

I farther advise you, in opposition to your teachers, not to explain the word *neighbor*, in such a sense, as if you were obliged to love them only, who love you: nor are you to imagine that it is lawful
to

SERM. to hate your enemy. But my doctrine
 XIV. is, you must love your enemies. And,
 { if they should persecute you, you must
 be so far from seeking any method of re-
 venge, that you must express that good-
 ness, whereby you may be like your hea-
 venly father. And nothing can conduce
 more to the perfection of your make,
 than to attain a resemblance of him in
 love; of him (I say) who maketh his
 sun to rise on the evil and on the good,
 and sendeth rain on the just and unjust.
 And remember, if you love those only,
 that love you, you have no higher cha-
 racter than the worst of men. Publicanes
 and sinners, the most infamous persons
 whatever, express a regard to those that
 love them. But my design is, to raise
 you to a resemblance of my heavenly fa-
 ther. If you love your enemies, you will
 be like to God. And my intention is,
 to engage you to be perfect, as your fa-
 ther, which is in heaven, is perfect.

As I have opened to you the wrong
 glosses of the law, given by the *Scribes*
 and *Pharisees*, subsequent upon my telling
 you, that your righteousness must go
 beyond

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 331

beyond theirs: I would remark farther, SERM.
concerning some wrong dispositions, which XIV.
those *Scribes* and *Pharisees* allow in them-
selves; but which I would advise you to

guard against.—When-ever they do alms,
they do it to have the praise of men.
And, for this reason, they trumpet out
their own character: and never fail tell-
ing what instances of alms-giving, they
have done, or are going to do. But you
must have a different disposition. You
must do them, in the most private and
modest manner, and with a view to ap-
prove yourselves to the creator. If you
have a prospect of the applause of men,
or temporal interest, you shall have a re-
ward; but it shall be here, upon earth.
And, therefore, *when thou doest thine alms,*
let not thy left-hand know what thy right-
hand doeth; that thine alms may be secret.
And thy father, who seeth in secret, him-
self will reward thee openly. Again; as the
pharisees have a disposition, in giving of
alms, to attain the praise and applause of
men; so have they, in their prayers.
They address to God, in the public streets,
in long prayers. And they are apt to be
thought,

SERM. thought, by others, to be eminently pious:

XIV. By this, they insinuate themselves into the favor of others; and gain greater interest thereby. But I tell you that you must avoid this. *They love to pray, standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets. Verily I say unto you, "They have their reward."* They seek the applause and favor of men. They enjoy what they have in view. But, if you approve yourselves unto God, in praying to him, he will reward you in a future and better world.

The Pharisees make long prayers; thinking that, by this, they shall be heard. But God does not desire your prayers to be long; or that you should make use of a clamorous importunity. For he is disposed to grant, before you ask him. Indeed, the *heathen* think their *Gods* to be influenced by din and clamor. But do not you use vain repetitions. For your father knoweth what things ye have need of, before you ask him.

To instruct you in a succinct way of addressing to heaven, I will teach you a prayer. "*Our father, who hast goodness*
" and

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 333

“ and wisdom to choose, and ability to SERM.
“ perform, what thou seekest necessary to XIV.
“ our happiness; *hallowed be thy name;*
“ may thy perfections be revered, and
“ regarded as sacred. *Thy kingdom come:*
“ Let the *Messiah's* kingdom come, and
“ be settled; and let it have its proper ef-
“ fect upon men: that so *thy will* may
“ *be done on earth, as it is in heaven. And*
“ *forgive us our debts, as we forgive our*
“ *debtors.* This is made a condition of
“ your receiving pardon at the hands of
“ God. No Christian can reasonably ex-
“ pect that God will forgive him, unless
“ he is disposed to forgive those that have
“ trespassed against him. *Lead us not*
“ *into temptation but deliver us from evil.*
“ Bring us not into circumstances, by
“ which temptations may be too power-
“ ful: but may thy kind providence so
“ order it, that we may not fall into sin.
“ *For thine is the kingdom, the power,*
“ *and the glory, for-ever, AMEN.* These
“ praises we offer up to thy glory. For
“ we know that that is the last end of
“ all.”

Because

SERM. Because he knew the importance of

XIV. forgiving one another, our Savior procedes to represent, that it was a necessary condition; and that none of his disciples could expect forgiveness, at the hands of God, if they did not forgive others. *For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But, if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.*

Again: There is another disposition in the *Pharisees*, which is wrong; that is, with respect to *fasting*. They disfigure their faces, and appear with a sad countenance. And they have their reward. They seek applause of men; and they have the reward they seek after. *But, when ye fast, annoint your heads and wash your faces.* Do not appear externally dejected. But secretly mourn for your sins. And your father, who seeth in secret, will reward you openly.

There is another wrong disposition in the *Pharisees*, which you must guard against. And that is, *Do not lay up your treasures on earth.* The character of the *Pharisees* was making long prayers, and devour-

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 335

devouring widows houses ; or making a great show of religion, and at the same time having too strong affections to things here below. And this partly arose from their expecting of Christ to set up a temporal kingdom. Now (says our Savior) you must take care to correct this wrong disposition. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth* ; liable to be invaded and corrupted : but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. For there it is secure, and will be sufficiently guarded from violence ; and there moth and rust do not corrupt. As an argument to this, I would represent to you, that, *where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*. It is no surprize that the earthly-minded should be groveling in their pursuits. Transmit your treasure to another world : and you will find your treasure to have an attraction, to draw your desires to another world. This will be a great benefit to the guidance of the conscious principle : As the eye, when clear and free from any thing that is prejudicial to it, is to the body. *The light of the body is the eye. If, therefore, thine eye be single* ; that is, clear,

SERM.

XIV.

SERM.

XIV.

clear, or without any disorder, thy whole body shall be full of light. But, if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light, which is in thee, be darkness; how great is that darkness? And do not think that it is a matter of no great consequence, whether you lay up your treasure on earth, or in heaven. For no man can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. They will interfere the one with the other: and, therefore, it is impossible to serve God, and have an excessive fondness for the things of this world. The consequence is, that you should take no anxious thought about what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or where-withal ye shall be clothed. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Consider the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. And yet your heavenly father feedeth them. It is of no consequence, to be anxious. For you cannot, thereby, add any thing to your life. And, there-

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therefore, why take you anxious thought? SERM.
XIV.

Do not you see the wild lilies grow in the field? They have it not in their power to toil and labor. And yet I say, the greatest prince, that ever was, even *Solomon* in all the gaiety and grandeur of his court, did not appear with equal glory. Reason, therefore, thus with yourselves: "If God dresses up the grafs of the earth, can you imagine that he will not clothe you, who are of an higher rank?" *Take, therefore, no anxious thought, what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, and where-witbal ye shall be clothed.* By this, you will behave like heathens, rather than my disciples. For it is unbecoming my disciples to be immoderately solicitous about the things of this life. It would be much more agreeable to the character of my disciples, to pursue the happiness of the other world, and to labor after that temper and life, which is necessary to bring you to it. And, if you seek this kingdom, in the first place, all these things shall be given to you; or be, as it were, thrown into the bargain. Therefore, be so far from laying up treasures, here, on

VOL. IV. Z earth;

SERM. earth; as rather to take no thought for
 XIV. to-morrow; no solicitous thought, no
 distrust of the kind care of providence.
 For the morrow will bring evil enough,
 to imploy your thoughts and care.

Our Savior, in the seventh chapter, taught his disciples, not only to understand the law in a more extensive manner than the *Pharisees* did; but to avoid those wrong dispositions which appeared in them. The *Pharisee*, in the parable, gloried that he fasted twice a week; and was not like that publicane. They were very prone to this. Now (says our Savior) do not give into this censorious temper. For it is a settled law with the governor of the world, that whosoever shall severely censure others, shall have the same returned upon him. Besides: we find many are apt to censure others, and are much more criminal than those whom they censure. They censure only a mote in another's eye, when they have a beam in their own eye. *Ye hypocrites, first cast the beam out of your own eye: and then you may see clearly to cast the mote out of your brother's eye.* In the next place, our Lord teaches

Christ's Sermon upon the mount. 339

teaches his disciples not to reprove persons SERM.
of an incorrigible temper; who would be XIV.
so far from receiving a kind reproof, that
they would turn against them, and hurt
them. Therefore, he advised his disci-
ples that they should not imprudently ex-
pose themselves to such.

Again: our Lord procedes, and offers
two more rules of conduct. As if he had
said, "I will not finish this discourse
" without offering you two commands
" of great importance." *Viz.* Let your
minds be possessed with full assurance of
the fatherly affection of God. *Ask and*
it shall be given, &c. If a father here
on earth has a tenderness to his offspring,
how much less can you suppose that your
heavenly father will not impart to you
what is really for your good? You ought,
therefore, to entertain such sentiments of
his goodness, as to form a belief, that, by
addressing to him, you shall receive all
that is proper to make you happy.—The
second important rule of conduct, is,

That, if God has a disposition to do
good to us, and to those that continually
and importunately address him, we, by

SERM. analogy, ought to do good to others.

XIV. *And, therefore, all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. For this is the fulfilling of the law and the prophets.*

These are two comprehensive duties, which our Savior expressly enjoins. Entertain such sentiments of the goodness of your heavenly father, as thereby to be animated to a constant application to him. And, in consequence, he will do good to you, if you are disposed to do kindness to others.

We now come to the last part of our Savior's sermon: in which he lays before his disciples the snares, difficulties, and temptations, which might arise, and prevent (without a due care) their compliance with those his precepts. The first thing, which might prevent their coming under subjection to those laws, might be the difficulty that attends the practice of them, and especially upon their first entrance into his kingdom. You will easily find that the virtues, which I have recommended, may by some be thought to be difficult. *It is a strait gate, and a nar-*

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row way : and that is the reason why few will enter into it. On the contrary, the path of gratifying inordinate desires is large, easy to enter upon, and has many temptations to ingage men to continue in it. However (says our Lord) *enter in at the strait gate*. For, though the gate to vice is wide, yet remember the consequence of disregarding those divine and spiritual precepts, will be distress and ruine, everlasting death and misery. Because the way of vice is broad, and the entrance into it large, will you therefore ingage in a course of vice, when you are sure that the path will lead to misery? Rather enter into the path of virtue. The way is narrow, at the first entrance; but it ends in life. SERM.
XIV.

A second temptation, which our Savior supposes might assault his disciples, was, the false prophets, who would appear to have innocence to recommend them, yet inwardly their tempers would be wild and ravenous like wolves. Our Lord, therefore, guards his disciples against those false teachers; and marks out a way, whereby they might be known. *By their fruits*

SERM. *ye shall know them.* If they have a ten-

XIV. dency to weaken moral obligations; if
 { their sentiments lead to vice, or carnal
 and irregular conduct, you may depend
 upon it, they are false teachers. *Do men
 gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
 Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit;
 but a corrupt tree bringeth forth corrupt
 fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth
 evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring
 forth good fruit. Wherefore, by their
 fruits, ye shall know them.* Do not en-
 tertain any new or difficult doctrine, as
 true or false, 'till you see what effect it
 has upon those that imbrace it. If it
 make them less desirous of moral virtue
 and a resemblance of God; depend upon
 it, their doctrine is to be rejected.

A third prejudice, or snare, against
 which our Lord cautioned his disciples,
 was, a wrong foundation of the hope of
 acceptance in another world.

This is of vast consequence to every
 one. Our Lord plainly sets before us,
 that it is not our zeal, or profession, or
 saying *Lord, Lord*, that shall give us the
 character of his true disciples here, or in-
 title

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title us to the glory of another world. SERM.

Many will make a pretended claim, and say, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? have we not had a warm zeal, and made a great profession? and represented the vast importance of believing in the peculiar doctrines of Christ? nay; have we not, in thy name, cast out demons? and done many wonderful works? And what is the answer? I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. XIV.

The last part of this excellent sermon on the mount, was, to incourage them to lay a solid foundation of their hope, and to pursue this method of acceptance at last, *like a wise builder, who built his house upon a rock: that, when the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, it fell not. For it was founded upon a rock. But every one, that heareth these sayings of my kingdom, and complyeth not with them, is like a man that built his house upon the sand: And, when the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, it fell; and great was the fall thereof.*

Z 4

I would

SERM. I would conclude with some remarks.

XIV.

1. We may see what a preacher Christ was!

He preached much of humility, and contempt of the world; of justice, and doing to others acts of extraordinary beneficence; of love even to our enemies; and that we should not seek the applause of men, but to be approved in the sight of God.

2. We may see the beauty of this sermon. It is all connected, every part, one with another.

3. We may see that our Savior's scheme of perfect morality lies obvious to every one's understanding. His preaching was plain and practical. *Never man spake as he did.*

TRACT



TRACT I.

A prayer.



LORD OUR GOD, the great TRACT
creator and governor of the ^{I.}
world, from everlasting to
everlasting GOD; unchange-
able in thy Being and in the perfections of
thy nature; the original and cause of all
orders of Beings, visible and invisible;
whose offspring we are; in whom we live,
move, and have our Being. As we are
indued with intellectual powers, and with
a capacity of contemplating and imitat-
ing thy perfections, we cannot but see that
we are under religious and virtuous obli-
gations. And we would express our praises,
that we are placed in that rank of Beings,
which

TRACT which are capable of receiving communi-
 I. cations of happiness from thee, in the ex-
 { ercise and practice of virtue.

O LORD, we would call upon all that is within us to adore thy goodness, that thou hast been pleased to favor us with the last and most perfect institution of revealed religion: that thou hast set before us our duty in a clear and an extensive light; and that thou hast favored us with an unspotted pattern and example: that thou hast, in the founder of our religion, exemplified, not only our duty, but our reward: and that thou hast set before us every motive and encouragement; which, if attended to, may effectually prevail with us to pursue what is proper to raise our reasonable nature to perfect and true happiness.

O LORD, we would express our grateful acknowledgements, that thou hast given us such terms of acceptance with thee, as are suited to the imperfection of our state; and to thy character, as the most perfect and excellent Being: that thou hast given us ground to expect that thy grace shall
 be

A prayer.

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be sufficient for us, who make a true use of our powers, and comply carefully with the means, which thou hast recommended to us: that thou hast opened to our view a prospect of a better life, a state of endless happiness and glory as a great and gracious reward.

TRACT
I.

O LORD, what couldest thou have done more for us, in wise goodness, than thou hast done, in the reasonable make, which thou hast imparted to us; and in the revelation of thy son? May we readily and sincerely entertain and imbrace this way of happiness, which thou hast set, in a due light, before our minds, in the dispensation of the gospel. May we yield to be formed, by its precepts and example, in the temper of our minds, and the regulation of our actions: that we may be growing up to a greater degree of holiness, here; and to an higher fitness for being perfectly and completely happy, in the future world.

Forgive wherein we have offended thee; and enter not into a severe and rigorous treatment; for, then, *there could no flesh be*

TRACT *be justified in thy sight.* May we ever
 I. have our minds attentive to discern the
 beauty and excellency of holiness; and the
 happy fruits, which arise from it. And
 may we discern the deformity of vice;
 and the fatal and mischievous effects, that
 arise from it: that, by the one, we may
 be allured steddily to pursue the paths of
 piety and virtue; and, by the other, be
 deterred from every appearance of evil.
 And we beg, O LORD, that thou would-
 est strengthen our resolutions; that we
 may attain greater degrees of that holiness,
 which thou hast made necessary, in order
 to our being meet for endless happiness
 and glory. May thy goodness extend to
 all mankind. Bless these kingdoms, to
 which we are related. Bless our rightful
 sovereign *King George*, and all the branches
 of the royal family. Over-rule public
 counsels; that they may end in the
 prosperity and establishment of these na-
 tions.

Remember those that are in distress of
 mind, body, or outward circumstances;

and

A prayer.

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and be a present help to every one, who, TRACT
I.
in integrity, calls on thy name.

O LORD hear these our prayers, and accept of these our praises; which we humbly offer up to thee, in the name of *Christ*, our alone mediator; through whom, by the spirit, we ascribe unto thee all honor, glory, and praise, now and forevermore. Amen!



TRACT

and be a witness to every one who
 in answer calls on thy name
 O Lord hear these our prayers and
 accept of them our gifts which we
 humbly offer up to thee in the name of
 Christ our Lord Jesus Christ though we are
 by the blood we are made clean
 honor glory and praise now and
 evermore Amen



TRACT II.

A Letter to the Rev^d. -----
concerning apparitions.

DEAR FRIEND,



WHEN I left S—— I felt a TRACT II.
sensible abatement of satisfaction. And, from thence,
could not but conclude a great part of our happiness arises from agreeable society; which occasioned a croud of thoughts to pass through my mind, whose various complection it would be tedious to represent to you. Some had a sable appearance; that, when nature so strongly biasses us to society, so few should arrive to virtue enough to make it delightful. Others were as gay and

TRACT

II.

and pleasant as the conversation of my doctor. And, upon this, desirous of enlarging the entertaining part of life; my mind, unawares, hurried me on to an inquiry, "Why God should deny us the pleasure of conversing, in this world, with the happy spirits of another, in a manner suitable to our state: which, no one will doubt, but the divine being could with ease effect?" And I, who am not frightened at any thought, that, to some, may appear (on the account of its being a little out of the common way) to be rejected, suffered my mind to have its full swing. And,

In regard that, under the dispensation of the gospel, *we are come to the spirits of just men made perfect* (which I take now in the common interpretation) and there is a society, by contemplation, it is improper to say, "that there is no society between them and us, in this state."

If they should appear in a body, like to ours, and a *sensible* society (the other being more properly called *intellectual*) ensue: either the vehicles, in which they appear, would, in every circumstance, be like

like ours, or not. If not, but attended with a degree of *Shechinah*, the agreeableness of such a familiar converse, as I intend, would be much lost, as being less accommodated to our state. The favor (for it is part of the heavenly state) we cannot apprehend, should be granted to any, but the sincerely religious. And this would make the difference between the good and the bad too evident for the wise management of the present state of affairs. And the persons, who are disinclined to religion and the votaries of it, would, through malignity, fixing the odious character of *Enthusiasts* on the distinguished, take occasion to send them to the other world, to have their intire conversation with those, with whom they pretended to have (as a particular mark of honor) a society, in part here. And, not to mention, that such a conversation would not so easily be made to fall in with the performance of *the little affairs* (for so they may comparatively be, on just grounds, esteemed) which this our social state requires: Since, when-ever appearances somewhat of the like nature were granted, they

TRACT
II.

TRACT
II.

were, under an imperfect dispensation, to deliver the will of God, the indulgence of them now would be an abateing, in our esteem, the perfection and completeness of the revelation transmitted to us by Christ and his apostles.

If they should appear in vehicles like ours, how shall we be satisfied of the reality of the affair? *Numa Pompilius* his converse with *Egeria* is a proof of former intriguing. And I suppose, you do not think the present age less capable of an intrigue than the preceeding. If their converse has the strain of *heavenly*, does this amount to a sufficient evidence? when the apostle saw what was *unutterable*? I think, his meaning is, not only what he had not a grant to impart; but what, upon a view of our state, he discerned, could not be dressed up in words of a size with our present capacity. Either, then, they must speak of the heavenly state, as the scripture does; and then there would be a want of a proof of their being inhabitants of that state; or else, discourse of it in strains we could have no idea of. (For the new testament has set life and im-

immortality, in as full a light as our imperfect state will admit of.) And then their society would cease to be either so pleasing, or useful, as to make their familiarity necessary.

TRACT
II.

If, contrary to the laws that our im-bodied state is regulated by, they should appear, and, on a sudden, vanish: besides that this might be thought too over-bearing for creatures of free choice, in a state of tryal (as we must be, who are designed for rewards and punishments, according to the different courses we engage in) this would be attended with more ill consequences than good ones. The only good consequences, that I can think of, are the conferences of a future state; and the evidences, that would be given hereby to the reality thereof. Both of which are unnecessary, and unfit for us, in a state of probation; after the clear revelation of the christian religion. And the bad ones are many. Persons, in all probability, would be less inclined to the converse with others, which is necessary to the diligent performance of the affairs of this life; which (how trifling soever, in the opini-

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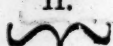
II.

on of some) are proper to be done, to make this state happy. Envy would be raised in those that were not favored with these visits, towards such as were. And censure be lavishly dealt out, by those that had the honor, to such as wanted this mark of respect. The persons, who had frequent satisfaction this way, would with difficulty bear the imperfections that attend common converse. So the practice of many virtues would be removed. And (what is worse,) curiosity, that bane to true knowledge, whether of things divine or human, and which our Savior, in many answers to his disciples, so often discountenanced, would be hereby excited, heightened, and inflamed.

These reflections make it appear to me as well kind, as wise, for God to deny us such converse.

And if, against what I have offered, which rather respects a general and frequent society, it is thought God may send, on some extraordinary design, one from the dead; I deny not, but that God may, if he pleases. But then, since this would be extraordinary; and, according to any notion

notion we can fix on the word *miraculous*, properly so; we cannot apprehend, but God must have a design, great, in proportion to the means, which he takes, out of the common course, that is settled with such wisdom and goodness; and such a design, as could not so well be effected by his fixed methods of governing men. The conversion of a sinner, our Savior has declared to be impracticable this way, in the moral of a parable, which gives law to the interpretation of the whole. And, if it was, I do not see it a method agreeable, after he has granted so powerful an instrument of conversion, as the *Gospel* is. The disposition of a little money and riches of this world, when God thinks them not valuable enough, to distribute them scrupulously, in his providence, cannot be deemed a reason weighty enough. Not to mention, that the instances, which some of too hasty an assent have given, of this nature have been small and inconsiderable, in comparison with more flagrant laws, that have been passed over and disregarded by our wise governor.

TRACT
II.

If any say, "These are ways of Providence, which we cannot account for." I readily own it, there are very few that I can. But, while we confess the ways of divine conduct are not to be traced out perfectly by us, let us not give in to such principles, as would weaken the foundation, on which revealed religion is built viz. *miracles*.

I thought to have writ more: but, as I am a little tired, so, I fear, my friend will think I grow a little warm. I have said nothing of *evil spirits*, for a very good reason. The very naming of them affrightens my mind, and awakens horror: and makes me hope that what I have offered against the appearance of good and benign spirits will be more strong against the appearance of these. When he, who is in our nature, is the governor of them; and cannot be supposed to want these less kind and humane ways to effect any designs of this government over us. What principles, then, I should go upon, in believing, or disbelieving the relations that contradict the positions, laid down, shall
put

put an end to the trouble this long letter
may give you.

TRACT
II.

Since the stories of this nature, were most frequent in the times, when the light was too faint and dim to look upon the matters of fact thoroughly: since many of them, that have seemingly been well attested, have afterwards been discovered; since the reasons against these appearances weigh more with me, than what are offered in favour of them: since it is common, when men cannot trace appearances to natural causes, to take sanctuary in spirits, (though, if we knew more of the laws of our mechanism, it is probable we should be able to find natural causes for effects that now appear to us surprizing) I cannot but think it reasonable that assent to these things should be very slow.

That, when a right regulation of assent is as well beneficial to others, as perfective of intelligent nature, it can be no more an injury to the person, to whom the appearance is supposed to be, to act to her, as if she was an imposture; than it is, in the way of business, to take the same security, as we would do, if all men were dishonest.

TRACT

II.

That, supposing I could not answer every little difficulty; if the reasons and consequences on the side of dissent, outweighed; I should think myself obliged to fall in with that.

I should apprehend myself under an obligation to remove what, in the opinion of wise and judicious persons, might in the least, have a tendency to occasion or promote an imposition.

I phanfy a little uneasiness and resentment to appear in my Doctor's countenance. But be assured, Sir, I should not have conquered my aversion to write, so far, as to scribble so long a letter, if I had not been moved to it, by a sincere affection to you. Whatever imperfections there may be in it, the principles of writing may atone for.

I am

Sir,

Your sincere friend

J. HUNT.



TRACT III.

A short treatise concerning the
Lord's Supper, addressed to a
young person.

 T is a province belonging to a TRACT
III.
protestant divine, and suitable to
the reason of things, to help
young ones in the knowlege, which is
necessary to bring them to a public pro-
fession of the Christian religion. To con-
demn this, which is a general practice,
without any sufficient reason for such a
behavior, will not (I presume) be your
conduct: since such deportment will carry,
upon the face of it, a want of modesty,
which is so graceful in youth.

I hope,

TRACT

III.

I hope, you will not imagine that I am bringing you into shackles. You are to judge for yourself, and procede according to the conviction of your own mind. If it should be said, "This and the like" methods are laying in early prejudices:" no thinking person will, by such an objection, be induced to neglect all instruction; especially, if it be in things, which are plain and important; which, if the objection has any weight, it would conclude too much, and influence to an intire neglect of all education, 'till bad habits become too fixed to be eradicated.

Give me leave, therefore, to offer you some thoughts of mine, which (I doubt not) you will believe to procede from a sincere affection to you.

I. Endeavor to settle it in your mind, that piety and extensive virtue are final in religion; and that principles of truth are instrumental, and what is positive, is to be regarded only as means.

Virtue (is doing) what is right, fit, and agreeable to the truth of things. And, when practised from a regard to God, who, as a perfect moral agent, must, in
con-

consequence, will that such creatures, as are made by him capable of it, should conform to what *reason* directs, it becomes *religious virtue*. Virtue cannot, at all times and in its proper extent, be performed, without the practice of the duties which refer to GOD. These offices are founded in the truth of things. And, if that be the rule of reasonable temper and conduct, the obligation to practise them will be plain and obvious. Without piety, therefore, and extensive virtue, there can be no true religion.

TRACT
III.

Under the term *virtue*, which is acting agreeable to the fitness and truth of things, I include

(1.) *A due regulation of our appetites and passions.* These are not to be extirpated; since they are placed in us, by our creator, for wise purposes; and make part of our constitution. But, since *reason* is given us to direct them, and prevent their exorbitance, we are to attend to its dictates, or we shall act disagreeably to our make. To indulge, therefore, any appetite or passion, unreasonably, and plead "that it is our constitution," is a failure
of

TRACT
III.

of just reasoning: since we argue only from a part of our constitution, and not the whole; and from the lowest part too; and leave out that which is the most excellent, and designed to guide and give law to the other. God, as a moral governor, has placed in us a moral sense; or, in other words, *conscience*; to whose dictates, if we constantly express a regard, we shall not fail of acting agreeably to the whole of our constitution, and the dignity of our nature; and become religiously virtuous. And, in consequence, attain inward satisfaction, and a pleasing assurance of the divine favor. The contrary to which will be the result of acting disagreeably to its directions.

(2.) *Universal righteousness, benevolence, and goodness.* To suffer others to enjoy their just claims, without infringing any, must be looked upon to be fit; and, therefore, our duty. Since we reasonably expect the same ourselves, fair and equitable treatment of others is, upon the same foundation, obligatory. It is, of consequence, important to consider the extensiveness of that rule, which is owned and acknowledged.

knowleged by all to be a proportionable one, TRACT
III.
namely, “ Do to another, as you would reasonably desire another should do to you, in like circumstances.” This is an obvious and ready measure, to regulate your conduct, in all your dealings with others. Kind affection to others; and indeavors, as far as they are reasonable and in your power, to lessen evil, and increase happiness, among those who are in your nature, and with whom you have to do; (which are comprehended under the terms *benevolence and goodness*) since you may reasonably expect them from others, you cannot but see, are binding upon you.

(3.) The highest veneration and esteem, reverence and love, are due to God, the creator, preserver, and moral governor of rational creatures; the source of Being, and the spring, from whom every blessing takes its rise; a care to imitate him, in his perfect moral character; a constant trust in him, and dependence upon him, &c.

Whoever sincerely complies with and practises all these duties, has a just claim to the character of *religious and virtuous*;

TRACT
III.

as long as he continues the practice of them. An allowed and indulged violation of any branch of them makes his moral character defective, and spoils the integrity of it, which cannot be recovered without sincere and unfeigned repentance and reformation.

The principles of truth, relating either to natural or reveled religion; and particularly to the christian doctrine; are to be considered as *instrumental*; and designed to bring us to *sobriety, righteousness, and godliness*: and are not available to our perfection, or happiness; unless these are produced by them.

The principles of *natural religion* are the Being and perfections of God, his providence and moral government, and a future state of retribution. These are the foundation of all religion, and presupposed in the belief of the *Christian doctrine*. They are clearly explained and fully established in *Wilkins's natural religion*: a book, which you have (I doubt not) carefully read and digested. These principles are intended to be motives to influence

concerning the Lord's Supper. 367

fluence us to right temper and conduct: TRACT
without which, they will not be of any III.
avail to our real happiness.

The principles of the *Christian religion*, in like manner, are ultimately designed to bring us to *religious virtue*; and are pointed and adapted to that end. And, for that reason, can never be justly ridiculed, by such as are sincere lovers of extensive virtue. Neither can it be judged unreasonable, by any considerate person, in this view, to make a public profession of the *Christian doctrine*.

II. Receiving the *Sacrament* is making a public acknowledgement of the *Christian religion*, as an institution, intended to beget and carry on to the greatest perfection, *religious virtue*: and so deservedly styled *divine*. The book, which Bp. Hoadly has wrote, upon *the nature and end of the Sacrament*, is worthy of your careful perusal. *

III.

* N. B. Since Dr. Hunt's death, there is published at *Glasgow*, by R. Foulis, and very beautifully printed, an edition of *The plain account of the nature and end of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, adapted to such christians as make no use of the common prayer, in their religious worship.

III. This public profession of the christian doctrine does not preclude your more exact examination of the *external* evidence of the pretension, which the *Gospel* makes to a divine original; as well as the *internal*. And, I think I may say, that the facts, on which it is founded, have a stronger proof, than any facts at such distance of time. And the books, which convey them down to us, may be proved to be uncorrupted, and authentic, with greater strength, than any other writings of equal antiquity. I would recommend to you the frequent reading of a small pamphlet intitled, *Plain reasons for being a Christian*; 'till you are a complete master of the train of reasoning, there made use of. At present, the internal evidence will be sufficient to justify your conduct. And, afterwards, you may more particularly consider the truths, which the gospel contains; and how each is pointed to practice: that you may take a full and distinct view of its fitness to attain its end, *namely*, to bring us to religious and extensive virtue.

IV. Do

IV. Do not imagine that, by receiving ^{TRACT} the *Sacrament*, you inlist yourself in any ^{III.} party; but only, in general, profess yourself a *Christian*; and thereby declare your resolution to pursue, steddily, religious virtue; as the last design of the institution of CHRIST.

V. Do not think an after-examination will take up so much of your time, as to intrench upon the pursuit of business.

I will venture to say, that one hour in twenty-four, constantly used in this application, by the help of a few of the best books, will bring you to an exact and judicious knowlege of religious truths. And I cannot but flatter myself that you will not think this too much to allow, to gain the knowlege of what will bring you to reasonable temper and actions; upon which, your own perfection and happiness, and the happiness of others, to whom you stand related, depend. If you have any inquiry to make, I shall be ready to give you the best answer I can.

TRACT
III.

And, if any thing I here offer to your consideration, be of any advantage to you, it will be a great pleasure and satisfaction to one who sincerely wishes you well.



TRACT



TRACT IV.

Aphorisms concerning the Being
and attributes of God.

1



ALL truths arising from *pro-* TRACT
portions and *relations* are ne- IV.
cessary; as the whole is
greater than a part, &c.

2

No existences, but God, and the modes
which belong to him, *space* and *dura-*
tion, are of the nature of truth, *necef-*
sary.

3

There is a difference between cause and
author. God does not exist without a
cause, that is a reason, *viz.* the necessity

B b 2

of

of his nature: but there is no author of his existence, for that would be absurd.

4

The necessity of God's existence, is the only foundation of his *absolute* perfections.

5

Original motion, or the possibility of it, proves agency.

6

The existence of any Being, distinct from the first necessarily existent Being, is an evident proof that that necessarily existent Being, (or God) is an agent: since, in regard that the Being, which exists necessarily, must be *one*, the other must exist by his will. There being no third *ratio* of existence.

7

There can be no possible reason why God should ever do that which is unreasonable, or not do what is reasonable; since he necessarily sees what is so; and has all power, in himself, directed by all knowledge

lege and wisdom; and cannot possibly want, or desire, any thing; whereby inferior Beings fall into moral evils. Of consequence, God must be a perfect moral agent.

TRACT
IV.

On freedom, or agency.

I

MAN is a dependent moral agent.

2

Freedom and agency express the same Idea.

3

The arguments against human freedom, or agency, are not good; because they conclude too much. See above, *Aphorism 6*.

4

There is a difference between *agency* and *power*: i. e. between a capacity of willing, and a capacity of producing the natural effect willed.

B b 3

5 The

Aphorisms concerning

5

The few effects, that our agency is capable of producing, will not argue against our agency, which consists not in power; but they prove our imperfection only.

6

If men were free, they could not have greater consciousness of their agency, than they have; any one instance of self-motion being a plain proof of it.

7

Agency admits not of degrees.

8

Motives of any kind affect not agency. If they did, God could not be an agent at all; since the reason of things is to him the strongest motive (if reason can be called a motive) that can possibly be supposed, in the perception of which he is necessarily passive.

9

The kinds of motives, *viz.* sensible ones (pleasure or pain) or rational ones, argue

freedom, or agency.

375

argue only degrees of perfection, not of agency. TRACT
IV.

10

To be subject to rational ones only, is the highest perfection, and it may be peculiar to the supreme.

11

Reasons and motives are abstract notions, and cannot possibly produce any effects.

12

When any effect seems to be produced by certain apprehensions of the mind, as by extreme and sudden fear, joy, hope, &c. our moral capacity only, not our natural agency, is affected.

13

Motive is not the cause of action, but is truly the end, aimed at, by the agent.

14

If self-motion (which we are conscious of) should be the action of some other Being upon us, it proves however agency

in some other Being, and so agency to be possible.

15

If agency be possible, and we are conscious of self-motion; and, of consequence, that we are agents: and there is no reason to suppose the contrary; there can be no sufficient ground to reject what experience so clearly establishes.

16

All knowlege supposes the thing known to be; and all just knowlege, that it is as it is known.

Of moral actions, with their consequences.

I

IT is essential to a moral agent that he is rational, or capable of perceiving truth.

2 A

2

A Being may possibly perform an action, morally good, which may not affect its own happiness; and may, therefore, be a *moral agent*, without a perception of happiness; much less can such perception alone constitute a *moral agent*.

3

Beings may be sensible of happiness, in many instances; and capable of pursuing it, without being capable of distinguishing moral good and evil.

4

A capacity of perceiving truth, and a sensibility of happiness, are distinct; either of them may possibly be without the other.

5

The *necessary* consequence of acting reasonably is only being reasonable; as the necessary effect of acting unreasonably is only being unreasonable.

6 Tho

6

The pleasure or pain, that seems perhaps necessarily, though it is only naturally, connected with virtue and vice, is only as so much inducement to such imperfect Beings, as we are, to pursue the one, and avoid the other.

7

A sense of happiness is not the foundation of morality.

8

Happiness itself requires a fitness, and reason, to justify a rational Being's pursuit of it.

9

A proper, reasonable and universal happiness (of which God only can possibly judge) is most certainly a fit end; and can never interfere with any moral agent's obligation.

10

Sensible motive, and a reason of action, ~~are~~ distinct. The latter only is an obligation

gation upon moral agents. The former, **TRACT IV.**
proper only to sensible Beings; and to be
judged of, as reasonable or otherwise, by
moral and sensible Beings.

11

Compliance with moral obligations (by which alone we can secure the favor of God) is the true way to happiness, which is the mere gift of God.

12

That truth, which is the foundation of virtue, or of a rule of action, must be something, which may be expressed by actions.

13

Action is essential to virtue. A capacity of virtue being no more virtue, than a capacity of action is action.

14

Moral truth differs from *natural*, no otherwise, than as the existence of things and their natures differ from their proportions, and proper application, dependent

TRACT IV. *dent on the will and power of intelligent moral agents.*

15

Necessary truths are the foundation of all moral obligation.

16

These truths of existence, as they are the objects of sense, concern not morality; as they are the objects of the understanding, relate to virtue.

17

Virtue secures happiness, not happiness virtue.

18

Pleasure and pain can never be objects of any moral consideration, but when actions relate to them alone; in which case, the greatest happiness is to be chosen; and of pains, the least.

19

Happiness has something of the nature of the last end; but it is only subordinate.

20 The

The rule of moral action to all moral agents is a conformity to all the natures, circumstances, and relations of things, that such Beings can observe and affect.

Moral obligations never do, or can, interfere : but moral obligations and happiness may. The former cannot give way, without guilt ; though the latter may and ought.

The breach of moral obligation cannot be repaired. The neglect of happiness in these cases will be made up to the virtuous, by the moral governor of the universe.

Virtue is the practice of reason, in its just extent ; according to the capacity and circumstances of any Being.

There can be no merit in thinking right ; but only in the degree of virtue,
with

TRACT with which truth (or perhaps error) is im-
IV. braced.



25

All virtue and true religion are essentially private and internal acts of the mind.

26

The actual love of truth is the only virtuous principle, and obedience to conscience is the only virtuous practice, of *men*.

27

In God, his perfect nature excludes all need of endeavor. In all imperfect Beings, faithful endeavor is the perfection of their virtue.

28

God is an eternal, necessary, independent, infinite, unchangeable, all-mighty, all-wise, and perfect, moral agent.

29

God exists in the best possible manner, having all natural and moral perfections.

30 Necess-

30

Necessity of existence cannot but exclude every possible defect.

31

God exists in the best manner, infinitely; and so is but *one*.

32

Two infinite Beings, of the same nature, are impossible: as two infinite spaces, or two eternities.

33

Two infinite Beings, of the same nature, coincide; of different natures, cannot be absolutely perfect; of contrary natures, destroy each other.

34

Solid extension, divisibility, &c. contradict infinity. Therefore God is an immaterial substance, or a spirit.

35

The supreme Being must be the proprietor, director, and disposer of all things:

or

TRACT or there must be an universal providence
IV. exercised of God.

36

The will of God is supreme in the universe. As it cannot be controuled, it ought ever to be obeyed.

37

The whole sensible world is subject to God, necessarily: the moral world ought freely and rationally.

38

God is to be considered under the character of a judge of the actions of such Beings, as are, by their natures, accountable.

39

It is necessary to the support of all imperfect, moral agents, that there should be a moral governor and judge of the whole world; and in degrees of proportion to the imperfection of their state.

40

Self-motion, consciousness, &c. cannot possibly reside in a material, *i. e.* a divisible substance.

41 Con-

41

Consciousness even in idea cannot be divided.

42

Consciousness may not be essential to immateriality ; but the substance of consciousness must be immaterial.

43

It is impossible that either a property should exist independent of any substance, or that an indivisible property should inhere in a divisible substance.

44

Man is of a duration, that extends beyond the limits of this life.

45

The pains and labor, with the small satisfaction, of every stage of life ; the calamities and miseries of so great a part of mankind, and the weaknesses, defects, disappointments, and sorrows of the happiest ; make the creating of men, by no means, worthy of the Being which is al-

Vol. IV. C c mighty,

mighty, wise, and good; if this be the
only scene.

46

To suffer virtue and vice, the excellency or corruption of men, who are moral agents, to labor under the present unequal distribution of things; and all retribution to end thus; discovers an indifference to moral good and evil; and must be a great reflection on God, as a moral governor.

47

Man, as conscious, is capable of existing, when the body is dissolved; 'till God shall please to annihilate, or destroy, him.

48

A judgment of reason, with agency, renders every Being, in the very nature of things, accountable for its actions.

49

Man is a *sensible* Being, subject to impressions of pleasure and pain.

50 Pleasure

50

Pleasure and pain follow virtue and vice, either *naturally* or *judicially*.

51

Passions and affections are no other than several sorts of pleasure and pain ; to which, by the wise author of our Beings, we are naturally inclined, or the contrary, by our constitutions ; or exposed by our situation.

52

To mere sensible Beings, they are a rule, invariably observed ; to rational Beings, they are natural inclinations, to be directed by moral judgment.

53

Man is to be considered as in a state of trial.

54

This our world is more fit for the proof of virtue than the perfection of it.

55

The nature of virtue does not alter with

TRACT the different circumstances of Beings; but
 IV. the particular instances of it do.

56

Resistance of temptation argues not greater virtue, but a more imperfect state, of a moral agent.

57

Every defect in moral conduct is guilt, and subject to condemnation.

58

The circumstances of guilt differ, and have various degrees of moral evil.

59

No attempts of any other Beings can affect the moral character of man; any more than the help of God himself can be attributed to him as virtue.

60

The universe is the creation of God; and we lie under obligations to all Beings that our actions can affect.

61 The

61

The vast space between us and GOD, is too great a chasm, to imagine, in the works of an all-mighty, wise, and good Being.

62

To Beings sensible of pleasure and pain, care is to expressed only that no unnecessary pain be brought upon them.

63

Men, as rational, moral agents, have peculiar rights, dominion over themselves, their actions, and just possessions.

64

There is a necessary distinction between *natural* and *moral* dominion. Property, consent, or general good, may constitute the former; the latter cannot possibly be in any other than GOD.

65

Obedience to truth and reason is obedience to GOD.

66

That all power and dominion are ne-

cessarily supreme, in the most perfect reasonable Being, is infinitely happy to the whole, and secures final happiness to the virtuous.

67

The different degrees of reason and moral capacity, in men, give them not dominion over each other; though any degree of them gives a natural dominion over themselves and Beings inferior.

Besides; who shall judge of these different degrees?

68

There is a natural equality among men.

69

Men, by consent, tacit or express, may transfer such properties, as are in their natures alienable.

70

Man may be considered as social, and under particular *laws* and government.

71

Whatever was the actual rise of government,

ment, the manner and measure of it must be judged of, by the end of it's institution; *viz.* the good of the community, of which the community is to judge.

72

Men are to be considered as under engagements of families, and in the relations of kindred.

73

Mutual happiness is greatly affected by each other's actions.

74

We owe to God *alone* all possible reverence and esteem.

75

The duty, which we owe and can pay to God, is mental.

76

External expressions of duty are no farther religious and acceptable, than they truly express the inward acts of the mind.

77

External, so far as it is designed to create

and excite internal, religion, is superstitious, and false; so far as it is contrary to it, is impious and immoral.

78

It is an unquestionable duty, which we owe to God, to rejoice in his dominion and government, and to submit to his will, always.

79

Obedience and submission are proper tributes, which we are obliged to pay to God.

80

The will of God, known by reason, makes not duty, but lays under additional obligation.

81

Men are obliged to practise virtue, under all its present difficulties, in the assurance of divine inspection and retribution.

82

We are obliged to act with choice and design; and to regard the truth of things, in our actions.

83 Few

83

Few actions are indifferent; at least, the habits of them.

84

All actions of moral Beings, done without reason, are unworthy their natures; done against reason, are immoral; done with deliberate principles of truth and reason, are worthy and perfective of their natures.

85

Men are obliged, in all their actions, to be sensible of many and great imperfections of their capacities, and circumstances; and consequently to be humble.

86

Assuming truth to himself, as if infallible; and prescribing it magisterially to others, argue great defect of humility.

87

No ignorance can be blameable, but of such things as he ought, (of which obligation hardly any judgment is to be made

TRACT made, but by God himself) or pretends,
 IV. to know.

88

We are obliged to preserve the dignity of our minds, and to keep the body and all the affections of it under due government.

89

All temperance, and sobriety, and self-government, and the constant practice of reason, are founded on this truth.

90

Our actions are to refer to our whole duration.

91

Man, as a sensible, as well as rational, Being, is obliged to secure his own happiness.

92

Since pleasure does not constitute duty, as such; and happiness is a mere arbitrary gift of God; men are obliged to consult their happiness, in subordination to their duty,

duty, and in an absolute dependence on TRACT
God. IV.

93

As we are in a state of trial, we are to aim at perfection, not to expect it.

94

Since we are sensible of many failures; and of consequence, demerit; we are to be humble, penitent, watchful, and look out for all the relief that may be had for our case.

95

We are to regard all the necessary hinderances of our condition, as so many real incapacities; and all the helps, we can get, as so many foundations of duty.

96

Justice, or giving to all their rights, is so plain a duty, that it cannot be supposed to be transgressed, but against conscience.

97

Of all the rights of men none are so sacred as those of *conscience*.

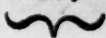
God is the only moral governor of the universe; if we could (as we cannot) give up these *our* rights, it would be great impiety to dispose of *his*.

All affectation of dominion over the consciences of men is absurd and wicked: all submission to such unrighteous usurpation, is base and servile.

Our good-will and kind dispositions should be universal; and we are obliged to promote the happiness of all men, so far as our wishes, powers, and influences can reach.

The world being under some government in general; and we, in particular, under the direction of our own, we cannot but be obliged to regard its orders, distinctions, and laws.

The goodness or badness of laws does
not

not concern us, as *subjects*; any farther TRACT
IV.
than to rectify bad ones, as far as we can, 
and in a suitable manner.

103

The public service is to be attended;
as far as all circumstances considered, it
requires.

104

We are obliged to all voluntary in-
gements and their consequences.

105

Different obligations arise from the re-
lations which we stand in, to families,
kindred, and dependents.

106

Happiness is a natural motive to mere
sensible Beings; and a reasonable end,
when subordinate, to sensible and moral
agents.

107

Beings, merely sensible, neither do, nor
can, err, in pleasure or happiness.

108 The

The objects of sensibility may be so strong as to destroy moral capacity.

It is the care of the great governor of the world to preserve his moral subjects from such violences, where he expects reasonable obedience.

Happiness is the aim of all men, those who make it their ultimate end, either take virtue to consist in pursuit of pleasure (which is an error; since reason and truth alone can be the proper end of rational Beings, as such; and cannot justly be considered as subservient to pleasure) or abandon themselves to their appetite, without, or against, reason; which is base, and sets a man as much below a beast, as his capacities are superior.

No truth is more clear than that sensible and rational Beings are obliged to secure their best and final happiness.

112

Since this final happiness is alone in the disposal of the supreme governor, it is folly to pursue it in the violation of the laws of *reason*.

113

If there be inconsistency between the practice of reason, and the present happiness of such as act reasonably, the present evil must be designed for their good, upon the whole, or finally.

114

If finally such, as practise virtue, are not happy, the constitution of things cannot appear reasonable.

115

If the circumstances and capacities of any Being are such, that it does, or may, enjoy more pleasure than pain, through its duration, though never so small; God cannot be charged with unkindness in creating it.

116 The

The vast variety of pleasure, even in our corrupted world; the grandeur, magnificence, and beauty of the works, which we can contemplate, declare rather profusion of goodness to be the design of the creator.

There seems no pain in the universe; but what was either needful for the good of the whole, or the consequence of unreasonable actions of moral agents, and directed to the highest designs of wisdom and goodness.

Pleasure is a sensation of ease, or joy; let the occasion be what it will.

The objects of pleasure and pain are infinite, as the degrees and manners of sensibility.

General ideas of pleasure may be framed; but few particular ones.

121

Since pleasure is to be measured by the apprehensions of him who possesses it, we cannot judge but of our own pleasure; and truth only can be a rule of our action towards the happiness of others.

122

That we seem to be more sensible of pain, than pleasure, is agreeable to our present state; in which we are to avoid, or bear, evil.

123

Absence from pain makes a great part of our pleasure; as the sense of such freedom, or deliverance, is real happiness.

124

The happiness of every Being must be such as agrees to its nature and capacity.

125

No rational Being can be happy in the practice of what it sees to be unreasonable.

126

For a creature, whose natural ease is

D d

in

TRACT in crawling, to take pleasure in standing
IV. upright, is incongruous, because unnatural.

127

Happiness is a constitution of God, in certain natures and circumstances, dependent originally, and constantly, on his will.

128

All happiness is to be sought for in the constitution and favor of God.

129

To judge and dispose of happiness, without mistake; and secure particular pleasure to any, throughout his whole duration; is the province of God alone.

130

Happiness consists greatly in the supply of mens defects, or in the perfection of their natures.

131

Pleasure, that attends virtue, though dependent on the will of God, is constant and certain.

132 Pru-

132

Prudence is the careful use of ourselves, and all that is in our reach, that we may be easy and happy.

133

Prudence in taking care of present happiness, must shun what will hurt reasonable, future expectations.

134

Virtue, as such, is the only mean of securing future happiness: prudence, therefore, in providing for present happiness, will not be looked upon, as true prudence, or deserving that name; if not under the direction and restraint of truth and reason.

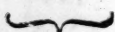
135

The present happiness of rational, as well as sensible, Beings must principally include the practice of virtue.

136

To be as innocent and free from guilt, by living in the practice of truth, as we

TRACT can, is the first rule of prudence.
IV.



137

Without this, a man may be in misery, with all other ingredients of happiness; with it, every condition will be tolerable.

138

The pleasures, which the practice of virtue communicates, are the greatest, that we are capable of injoying.

139

Impartial searches after truth, faithful and constant endeavors to practise reason, with an humble resignation to the governor of the universe, make up the greatest pleasures, which we are here to expect.

140

More happiness is in every one's power, than is generally imagined.

141

To get a steady, well-grounded, and habitual persuasion that all things and events are under the controul and direction of an all-mighty, wise, and good Being,

Being, in whose hands we are, is a rule of prudence, to secure our present happiness. TRACT
IV.

142

An equal temper, and steady courage, in all events, acquired by reason; whereby we are free from levity and unbridled joy, on the one hand; and from sadness and dejected fear, on the other; must be regarded as an important point of prudence and wisdom.

143

To resist some, and encourage other, natural dispositions; is a considerable part of prudence.

144

To believe that no trial can befall us, but under the permission and direction of God, and that courage is the best temper to bear, or improve, any circumstance; are the great inducements to calmness and resolution.

145

Indolent inactivity, and precipitant attempts.

TRACT tempts, are carefully to be avoided.
IV.

146

The art of action consists in avoiding sudden attempts; and in constancy and resolution, when we engage.

147

Self-government influences to our happiness, in preventing the pain which unbridled appetite will produce, and in obtaining the pleasure, that natural inclination was designed to afford.

148

To attain present happiness, it is proper to conform ourselves to our capacity, condition, and circumstances of life.

149

If our aims are above our powers, they are fruitless, and will bring on shame and disappointment; if below, we lose pleasures which we might enjoy.

150

What may give pleasure in the use, may be a burthen, in the mere possession.

151 A just

151

A just injoyment of the comforts of any state is very consistent with a calm and reasonable design of a better.

152

The mind is apt to be uneasy, merely through inactivity; and, in action, to forget real uneasiness.

153

To allow of no sloth is the first care; the second, to consult the best ingagement, that our temper and capacities will suit.

154

Habits of industry are great foundations of happiness.

155

To gain a general good-will to the whole creation is necessary to happiness.

156

Much regard is to be paid to natural love, more to friendship, most of all to universal benevolence,

D d 4

157 No

157

No pleasures so great and lasting, as that of distributing happiness to others.

158

To be prepared and fortified against the common and inevitable calamities of life, and what are esteemed the evils of it, is necessary to the happiness of it.

159

There is no real evil, but the misery of guilt, and the painful effects of vice.

160

All other evils are either imperfections of our nature and condition, or present pains, inflicted or permitted, for our good; and we are to blame, if we are not the better for them.

161

The practice of virtue is necessary to happiness, and the only sure way of obtaining it.

162 The

The design of our present existence is not happiness, but a preparation and fitness for it.

F I N I S.



400

Moral Reform

TRACT
VI

101

The design of our modern existence
not happiness but a preparation and
also for it



The ATTRIBUTES of GOD.

His natural attribute

A Spirit.

From his natural attribute
arise his

Knowledge, Wisdom, Power.

From the above attributes
arise his Holiness, or
moral Perfections,

Truth, Justice, Equity, Goodness, Mercy,
Patience.

Attributes arising from
his manner of existing
by

Absolute Necessity.

From a combination of
the above attributes, arise his

Eternity, Immenfity, Immutability, Infinity,
Unity, Happinefs, Majefty, Glory, Sovereignty.

Relative attributes,

Creator, Preserver, Governor, Judge.

As he is infinite and we
finite, he must there-
fore be

Incomprehensible.





T O T H E

R E A D E R.



YOU have now four volumes of *Doctor Hunt's posthumous works*. The Doctor left, in his own hand-writing, the substance of *the sermons on the Being and attributes of GOD*, excepting only the two last, viz. *GOD incomprehensible, and the concluding Sermon upon the attributes*. *The letter also on apparitions, the treatise on the Lord's supper, and the aphorisms*, were all of them written with *Dr. Hunt's* own hand.

There

There are some sermons, which (tho' he did not write them, himself) the Dr. had revised and corrected.

The rest of these four volumes were taken in short-hand, from Doctor *Hunt's* mouth, as he preached them; and afterwards transcribed in long-hand; — some of which were taken more perfectly, others less so. There still remain as many as would make some volumes more; but such as were thought the most perfect and valuable were picked out, and are here published; though some valuable things still remain.

What I have done, has been to select what might be most useful, to put them into some method, and to do all the justice I could to the subject, where the sense was left imperfect, or Doctor *Hunt's* thoughts seemed not to be fairly represented: in which cases, I have kept as near as I was able to his sentiments, and even to his words and phrases.

Some.

Sometimes I was obliged to put two sermons into one, to leave out some repetitions, and to make some other lesse material alterations.

There were, sometimes, two or three copies of the same discourse; which were carefully compared, to make that, which is published, as correct as possible.

The similarity between one of the sermons and one of Doctor *Clarke's*, was unknown to the editor and his friends, till after it was printed: and then it should have been cancelled, if that set of sermons could have been made complete without it.

The plan of the attributes in one view, was drawn up by Doctor *Hunt* himself; and it is so easy and natural, so curious and exact; that (it is hoped) the publishing of it will be both acceptable and useful.

For *memoirs of Doctor Hunt's life*, the reader is refered to the funeral sermon prefixed to these four volumes.

In

In preparing these four volumes for the
 presse, and in publishing them, I have act-
 ed a faithful part: and shall not grudge
 my time and labor, provided they do the
 good, which (I apprehend) they are
 well calculated to do.

GEORGE BENSON.



